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The SEARCH FOR THE SPY

ROSS KAY

THE SEARCH FOR THE SPY

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"HAVE THE FILMS DEVELOPED AT ONCE" ORDERED THE COLONEL. "MEANWHILE I SHALL BE COMPELLED TO DETAIN YOU," HE SAID.

(*Page 122*) *Frontispiece*

THE BIG WAR SERIES

THE SEARCH FOR THE SPY

The Adventures of an American Boy at the Outbreak of the War

BY
ROSS KAY
Author of "The Air Scout," etc.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
CLARE ANGELI

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THE BIG WAR SERIES

By Ross Kay

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THE SEARCH FOR THE SPY
THE AIR SCOUT
DODGING THE NORTH SEA MINES
WITH JOFFRE ON THE BATTLE LINE
FIGHTING IN FRANCE
BATTLING ON THE SOMME

(*Other volumes in preparation*)

BARSE & HOPKINS

PUBLISHERS NEW YORK

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The Search for the Spy

VAIL-BALLOU COMPANY
BINGHAMTON AND NEW YORK

PREFACE

A man fifty years of age said to the writer not long ago that if it had been in his power to select his time to live he would have chosen the half-century which had fallen to him. Certainly the world has never seen more momentous deeds than those which the year 1914 has witnessed. Perhaps it never will see the like again.

American boys are deeply interested in the war in Europe, because not only is it a gigantic struggle, but their own future will be largely influenced by the outcome. The fear of spies in London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Petrograd and in other cities has been one of the early and pronounced facts.

The writer has tried to present a picture of the big war which should be interesting but free from sensationalism. It is his hope that his boy friends will continue their reading beyond these stories until they shall have obtained a clear knowledge of this great war of the nations, —its causes, deeds and results. Whatever one's feelings may be concerning war itself, there surely can be no question as to the desirability of a clear understanding of the contest.

C. D. TRANSFER JUN 19 1939

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"Have the films developed at once" ordered the colonel. "Meanwhile I shall be compelled to detain you," he said. *Frontispiece*

An old man, a sailor, approached the girl and spoke to her in a low voice. . 50

Into the town dashed the car still moving at terrific speed. 86

"Come down!" shouted the captain drawing his revolver. 212

THE SEARCH FOR THE SPY

CHAPTER I

A LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

"ARE you Mr. Alden?"

"Yes."

"Mr. Philip Alden?"

"That is what people call me."

"Then I have a letter for you."

The speaker was Earl Platt, a young American boy about seventeen years of age. He and the man whom he had addressed were standing near the rail on board the *Gallic,* now a third of the way on her voyage across the Atlantic.

Earl Platt and his brother Leon were twins. In the summer of 1914, before they entered college, they had planned to spend their summer vacation in Europe. Both boys were to be a brief time in England and then Leon was going on to France where the boys had relatives. Earl, how-

ever, preferred to remain in England several weeks longer as he was eager to visit Rugby. The place where Tom Brown had gone to school the young American thought would be of special interest to him.

After a brief visit at Rugby he planned to go on to Oxford and then journey to Cambridge. The two great English universities were places of special interest, at least Earl Platt thought they would prove to be.

While the boys were separated they expected to make their various journeys on motorcycles. Later, they planned to meet either in Belgium or Germany for a further tour of the Continent.

The father of the boys had quickly given his consent to the plan when it was first proposed, explaining to their somewhat anxious mother that the brothers would be taught self-reliance and that their experiences would do them good. "Throw them on their own resources," he had said sagely in giving his consent. "If they get into trouble they'll learn how to get out again."

Earl Platt as he stood by the rail watching the stranger to whom he had given a letter of introduction was impressed first of all by the physical vigor of the man. Mr. Alden was about thirty years of age with dark eyes and hair, smoothly

shaven, and manifestly of great physical strength. There was also an expression that had appeared in his eyes when Earl had first spoken to him which to an extent had startled him.

"Whew!" Earl said to himself, "if Mr. Alden and I meet in a narrow street some dark night I am going to give him all the sidewalk."

It was plain too that the man was as quick and keen as he was strong.

After he had read the letter through without comment Philip Alden turned to Earl and said quietly, "Are you alone?"

"Yes," replied Earl with a laugh, "that is, my brother is with me."

"Older brother?"

"No."

"Then I should hardly think your parents would entrust a younger brother to a boy no older than you," suggested Mr. Alden.

"He isn't younger."

"Then you must be twins."

"Yes, that is what we are. My brother Leon is going on to France in a few days but I am going to stay longer in England."

"You will meet on the Continent?"

"That is our plan."

"Where?"

"In Belgium or Germany, although we may both go on to Switzerland, but we shall go together."

"I suspect that you may not meet as you planned, at least this summer," suggested Mr. Alden quietly.

"Why not?"

The young man shook his head, but offered no explanation of his strange statement. After a brief pause he inquired, "What can I do for you, Earl?"

"Nothing," laughed the lad. "I saw your name on the list of passengers and then I remembered that a German friend of my father told him that you were expecting to sail on the *Gallic* and that he would give me a letter to you. I do not think I need any special help, but I was afraid Mr. Schwartz—"

"How long have you known Herman Schwartz?" interrupted Mr. Alden.

"I do not know him at all. My father knows him but I cannot tell you how long."

"You did not tell me in what business your father is engaged," suggested Mr. Alden.

"He is a manufacturer."

"Where is his mill?"

"In Connecticut."

"Some day you and your brother will take over your father's business, I suppose?"

"I have not thought as far ahead as that," laughed Earl. "I hope it will be a long time and I think it will have to be because my father is so interested in his work that he does not even go away with my mother when she goes to the mountains for the summer."

"Well, I am glad to meet you," said Mr. Alden as he prepared to turn away. "Let me know if I can do anything for you. I am not very much of a talker, as you see, but I shall hope to see you again before we land."

Earl remained standing watching the man to whom he had given his letter of introduction, as he walked slowly toward the bow of the great steamship.

Somehow the interview had left him puzzled. Mr. Alden, although a stranger, had succeeded in making him talk and tell him many things pertaining to his brother and himself, as well as of his father and his business, and yet not a word had he said concerning himself.

It was difficult for the young American to understand why he had presented the letter too when he was a complete stranger. His father had secured letters of introduction from a score of friends

which his boys were to use in various cities they visited. Why then this letter had been given him Earl was at a loss to understand. Indeed he would not have used the letter at all had he not noticed the name of Philip Alden in the list of passengers.

Was the man an American or Englishman or a German? It was impossible for Earl to decide to which nationality his new acquaintance belonged. There were certain traits he had manifested which made him think that he might be any one of the three and yet somehow when he was inclined to decide that Philip Alden was an American a moment later he would revise his decision and decide that he must be a German. A moment afterward Earl was convinced that he belonged to neither of these nationalities but was an Englishman.

The matter was still unsettled when Earl saw Leon approaching.

"Come on, Earl," called his brother, "we want you for a game of shuffleboard."

"All right," responded Earl promptly, as he at once went with his brother to the stern where various games were played on deck when the weather was clear.

His surprise was great when he noticed that his opponent in the game was none other than Philip

Alden. Earl made no remark, however, and the man to whom he had given his letter of introduction did not betray his acquaintance by any word or sign. It was soon manifest, however, that he was a skillful player and played hard to win. Both the Platt boys were among the best in the game and it was not long before an interested assembly was watching their playing.

The third and decisive game was exceedingly close after each side had won. It was also long drawn out, for no sooner would one player locate his disk, on the board than his opponent with a skillful shift would drive it from its place.

At last, however, the younger players won and the enthusiastic applause of the spectators plainly showed that the victory was popular, at least among the younger and more demonstrative passengers.

It was not until the following day that Earl again met Mr. Alden. A boy had just brought a wireless message which Mr. Alden evidently was reading with keen interest, although his face was expressionless.

As Earl quietly approached him the man abruptly turned, and savagely demanded, "What are you doing here? Why do you follow me?"

CHAPTER II

A STRANGE REQUEST

"I AM not following you," retorted Earl indignantly, as he turned abruptly to depart.

"Hold on," called Mr. Alden, "you must pardon me. I did not mean to be rude. The truth of the matter is I was not well last night and my nerves are all on edge this morning. Sit down in this steamer chair next to me. I want to talk to you," he added as he led the way to his own chair.

Still more puzzled than angry, Earl followed Mr. Alden and soon in spite of his efforts found that he was once more telling the stranger many things without receiving much information in return.

"Are you an American?" at last he demanded.

"Don't I look like one?" inquired Mr. Alden quietly.

"Sometimes I think you do and then again I think you are an Englishman or maybe a German."

"Do I have the 'burr'?"

"No. I do not know that you have and yet

sometimes I think you are not an American."

"I have just come from China."

"You certainly are not a Chinaman."

"Are you sure?" As he spoke a strange transformation seemed to come over the man's face. His eyes became narrow and Earl would have declared that there was a slant in them not unlike that which he had noticed in Sam Long, the Chinese laundryman who came to his home twice every week.

In a moment, however, the expression was gone.

"Are you going to England now?" inquired Earl.

"I cannot very well avoid going there," replied Mr. Alden with a smile.

"You might stop at Ireland. I understand we are to make a landing at Queenstown. That would be a part of England, or Great Britain, wouldn't it?"

"If I should land at Queenstown, would that make me an Irishman?"

"I am sure I do not know," laughed Earl. "A minute ago I thought you might be a Chinaman."

"You watch me when we land at Queenstown. You may then think that my first name is Patrick instead of Philip."

The conversation ceased as Mr. Alden said he

must go to the writing-room to write some letters to be posted when the steamer stopped at Queenstown.

Later, when in his stateroom, Earl was telling his brother about his interview with the man to whom he had presented his letter of introduction, he said, "I never met a man just like him."

"That is not unlikely," laughed his brother. "No two men are ever just alike anyway, are they?"

"I cannot tell to what nationality he belongs. Sometimes I think he is an American and then again I think he is a German. He told me he had just come from China and if you will believe me, while he was telling me, his eyes took on a slant and I would have told anyone that his name was Sam Long or Sing Lee."

"He is a regular chameleon, isn't he?"

"Perhaps so, but when I happened on him a little while ago he was all alone and had just received a wireless message. He turned on me as if he was ready to hit me. Then I can tell you his face didn't look like that of a Chinaman."

"What was his message?"

"I don't know, he didn't tell me. In fact he has got me to tell him almost all I know."

"How long did that take?" inquired Leon.

"He got me to tell him all I know," repeated Earl, ignoring his brother's words. "And then when he talked about himself he didn't tell me anything. I feel like a sponge that has been squeezed dry."

"You are too easy. You haven't learned yet how to look wise and say nothing. I fancy there are not many things we have planned to do that Philip Alden does not know by this time."

"I didn't tell him much about ourselves," protested Earl quickly.

"Did you tell him where we were going to meet?"

"Yes, but he asked me."

"I don't suppose you told him what business father was in?"

"Yes, he asked me that, too," said Earl somewhat foolishly.

"Of course you didn't tell him what we are going to do in England?"

"Well, yes, I did," admitted Earl. "I do not know why I did, but he seemed very much interested, so I told him we were going down to Chester and then to—"

"Then I suppose you told him that I was going to France."

"I believe I did mention it," said Earl, com-

pelled to laugh at the quizzical expression on Leon's face.

"The only comfort I get," declared Leon shaking his head slowly, "is that when we come into France or Belgium you won't tell everything you know, simply because you cannot speak French."

"But they say there are people everywhere you go who speak English," suggested Earl laughingly. "Honestly, Leon, I didn't mean to tell Mr. Alden anything and yet when you speak of him it does seem that I must have been talking a good deal more than I intended to."

"I shall have to look after you. The man may be a fraud."

"Yes, but Mr. Schwartz wouldn't have given us a letter to him if he had not known him."

"No one knows how long he has been acquainted with him," suggested Leon decisively. "It was good of him to give you the letter, I will admit, but I confess I do not like to tell my secret thoughts to a stranger."

"I will be careful," laughed Earl. "I will do my best."

"For how long?"

"All the while. I—"

"I won't put you on such a strain as that," said Leon, shaking his head. "If you will promise me

that you will not tell Mr. Alden anything more about our own affairs before we touch Ireland, I will be satisfied."

Earl found it somewhat easy to fulfill his promise to his brother, chiefly because it was impossible for him to have any further interviews with the man who had been the subject of their conversation. Not that Mr. Alden apparently held himself aloof, and yet whenever Earl approached him something in the manner of the man served to convince the impulsive boy that it would be better to postpone the interview.

However, after the *Gallic* had landed at Queenstown and the passengers who were to remain on board had watched the crowd disembark, Earl, who had been an interested spectator, as he turned from the rail found himself once more face to face with the man who had been such a mystery to him.

"A good many of those Irish people are coming home with trunks," suggested Mr. Alden. "They went to America with bags or bundles. America does great things for some of her people."

"Indeed she does. I begin to suspect now that you are an American, Mr. Alden," Earl added with a laugh.

"So you remarked. Perhaps you will think I

am an Irishman now. I told you, did I not, that after we landed at Queenstown you might think my features were somewhat Hibernian?"

"I did not notice any change," laughed Earl. "Do you know where this boat was built?"

"Belfast."

"I wonder how long it took to build it."

"Two years."

"How much freight can she carry?"

"Twenty-four thousand tons."

"Do you know how large those smoke-stacks are?"

"They look as if they were round, don't they?" replied Mr. Alden, "and yet they are not. The diameter is seventeen feet one way and eleven feet the other. If they were on the ground you could drive your automobile right through them."

"Whew!" whistled Earl. "I wonder how much coal the *Gallic* burns."

"They take on six thousand tons for a round trip."

Earl looked in amazement at the man as he spoke. There seemed to be no subject on which his information was not complete.

"It is hard work," he suggested, "for the stokers to feed the fires. I went down yesterday with the captain."

"Stoking is hard and hot work, but the men work in gangs of eight for four hours and then have eight hours off."

"How far do those Mother Carey's Chickens follow us?" inquired Earl as he pointed to the little birds which were to be seen not far from the stern of the great steamship. "Have they followed us, or are these birds that come out from Ireland?"

"I have seen them follow all the way across. The muscles of these little birds must be tremendously developed. I think we shall dock at Liverpool early to-morrow morning."

"At what time?"

"About two bells."

"I never can get these bells straight in my mind," laughed Earl.

"It is very simple," explained Mr. Alden. "At twelve o'clock, four and eight each, the eight bells strike. When these have been struck, one bell then is struck at the end of the next half hour, two at the end of the second, three at the end of the third and so on until eight have been sounded."

"Then they begin all over again?"

"Yes, they begin all over again."

"Two bells would be nine o'clock?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Alden. "By the way I have a favor to ask of you."

"I shall be glad to do it if I can," responded Earl quickly.

"I wish you would take this package and keep it in your bag until I see you in London. Here is my London address," he added, as in addition to a small flat package he handed a card to his companion. "I have also a letter which I shall be obliged to you if you will mail for me when we arrive at Liverpool."

"You can mail it on shipboard," suggested Earl quickly.

"Yes, I know, but there are special reasons why I wish this letter not to be mailed on board the *Gallic*. Will you keep the package and mail the letter after you have gone ashore? You may mail it either at Liverpool or at Chester. I think you told me you were going to Chester?"

"We expect to," said Earl as Mr. Alden at once departed.

Glancing at the envelope which he held in his hand Earl was somewhat startled when he saw that it was directed to Philip Alden, Potsdam, Germany.

Surely the man was puzzling and the young American was at a complete loss to account for the strange request which had been made of him.

CHAPTER III

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING

THE experiences of landing in a new and strange country were too interesting, however, to permit the boys long to think of the mysterious actions of the stranger.

Their baggage had been carried into the station and placed at the stand where a huge letter P was to be seen. The examination, however, was brief as the boys possessed no articles on which duties could be collected.

When this task had been completed both boys at once made preparations for securing their bicycles and journeying to Chester, about twenty miles distant. Their baggage was shipped to the hotel at which they were expecting to stop and then after they had crossed the Mersey River to Birkenhead they at once set forth on their journey.

"Did you ever see such roads as these!" exclaimed Earl enthusiastically.

"Yes, they are pretty good," acknowledged

Leon, who was not inclined to believe that any country could produce anything superior to that which was to be found in his own land.

"Did you notice how the trains tear through the country? Why, they must be going a mile a minute!" he added as another of the frequent railway trains swept past them.

"They might go fast," acknowledged Leon with a laugh. "Such little dinky cars and engines, there is nothing to hinder them. They don't have to slow down when they get into a village, for the roadbed is all elevated."

"Can't you find anything good to see?" laughed Earl.

"Lots of things," replied Leon soberly. "I think these hedge-rows on the farms instead of fences, and the trees, and the way the whole country is cultivated is wonderful. But then, why shouldn't it be? The people have lived here for a thousand years and haven't much else to do."

In spite of his apparent indifference, however, Leon was as deeply interested as his twin brother in the scenes through which they were passing.

Over the smooth road they made amazing speed and long before the hour for luncheon they arrived at the quaint little city of Chester where they se-

cured the rooms which they had previously engaged by a telegram.

When they entered the dining-room the first person whom Earl saw was Philip Alden. His surprise at beholding the man again was so marked that even Alden, who seldom smiled, betrayed his amusement. He was seated at a small table where there were two vacant places and beckoning the boys to join him the three soon were busily engaged upon their repast.

"How did you happen to be here?" demanded Earl in surprise.

"I didn't 'happen.' I came because I wanted to get that package I gave you. You mailed the letter, did you?"

"Yes," replied Earl. "The package is upstairs in my room. I will get it for you after luncheon. I don't know what it is and I don't know why you gave it to me."

"It is well," replied Alden quietly, "not to know too many things. What are your plans for the afternoon?"

"We haven't made any plans."

"Then if you would like to have me I will stay over a little while and show you some of the interesting spots in this quaint old city. Did you ever hear of Cheshire pigs?"

"Yes."

"Well, we are now in the country where they grow. Chester is in Cheshire County."

"And do Cheshire cheeses come from here, too?" inquired Leon.

"They do, and so do Cheshire cats. Did you ever hear of them?"

"The Cheshire cats are the ones that always look so happy. They have a smile on their faces all the time, haven't they?" laughed Leon.

An hour later the two brothers found Mr. Alden waiting on the piazza of the hotel and he at once joined them.

"I shall have time to show you only a few things before I go on to London," explained Mr. Alden, "but I shall be glad to look at them again with you. It has been a long time since I have been in Chester. This old wall we are following," he explained, "is built on the line of the one which the old Romans built almost two thousand years ago."

"It seems strange," suggested Leon, "that Cæsar should have led his Romans over here into this island."

"Well, he did," said Earl, "and I remember when he came too. It was B. C. 55, wasn't it, Mr. Alden?"

"That's right, although it was not until five

years later that the Roman soldiers made their way up here."

Out from the wall on the top of which they were walking were shops and stores and houses extending directly over the street beneath.

The walk was more than two miles in length and frequent stops were made at the more interesting places. One of these places was King Charles's Tower. Leading the way up the steps the guide advanced to a small window in front of which he told Leon to take his stand. "There, young man," he said, "you are now standing right where King Charles I was standing when he was watching his army out on the moors you can see over there."

"What was his army doing there?" inquired Leon.

"That is a good question. They were trying to stand in front of Oliver Cromwell's Yeomen, but they did not succeed very well."

"They had some good fighters in those days," said Leon.

"Not as good as we have in our day," said Mr. Alden quietly. "The world has never seen such a fighting machine as Germany has."

"How many fighting men can Germany mobilize?"

"About five million." There was an expression

of pride in Mr. Alden's face which he did not attempt to conceal. The expression was there but a moment, but it was not lost upon Earl, who already had been greatly puzzled by the strange man who now was their guide.

"How many has France?" inquired Leon.

"About four million."

"But England only has about six hundred thousand men in her army."

"This is correct," said Mr. Alden and Earl was convinced that there was a trace of anger or contempt in his voice as he spoke.

"Suppose England and Germany should declare war," suggested Leon. "England couldn't do much without her fleet, could she?"

"It is a question how much she'd do with it," said Mr. Alden dryly.

"I thought England had a fleet twice as large as that of any other country," said Earl as the party resumed its walk along the top of the old Roman wall.

"They did have at one time, but Germany has been making great strides. Germany now has two hundred and ninety-six naval units and England has four hundred and eighty-four."

"Who would win if the two nations were to declare war?" inquired Leon.

"You will have to wait to find that out," replied Mr. Alden, although his manner betrayed that in his own mind he was confident that he knew what the result of such a great struggle would be. "Over yonder," he said as they neared the end of their journey, "is the river Dee."

"A pretty little stream, isn't it!" said Leon.

"It is indeed."

"Do you know," inquired Earl quizzically, "whether the Jolly Miller is still living here?"

"Do you mean the gentleman who looked upon his pillow and there he saw a flea?"

"The same man," laughed Earl.

" 'So he crunched his bones upon the stones and there he let him lie,' " repeated the boy gleefully.

"It has all been very interesting," said Leon when the party returned to the hotel, "but for me I would rather see something that is up to date. I don't care where Peter was buried or where John's grave is. What I want to know is what the English people can do to-day."

"I am going to Birmingham to-morrow," explained Mr. Alden, "and if you boys would like to go with me, I shall be very glad to have you. There you will see what can be done in this day and age."

"What do they do?" inquired Earl.

"Are you interested in guns?"

"What do you mean, rifles or cannon?" laughed Leon.

"Both, but especially rifles. You boys who live in America ought to know that many of the rifles that were used in your big war between the States were made in Birmingham."

"And shipped to our country?" demanded Earl.

"Yes."

"Then I do not care anything about going there."

Mr. Alden laughed as he said, "If you are not interested in the guns and the rifles perhaps you would be in the pins and pens or the nails and the watch springs."

"No, I think I will not go," said Earl. "What are you going to see there, the rifles?"

Alden glanced keenly at the boy but all he said when he replied was "I can not tell you that."

Indeed that night after their guide had gone to his room Earl said to his brother, "What do you make of that man?"

"Why?"

"He is the most puzzling man I ever saw. I can not yet tell what he is."

"He is not an American," said Leon quickly.

"How do you know he isn't?"

"Because he said to us, 'you boys who live in the States.' No American ever uses such an expression as that."

"That is true," said Earl thoughtfully. "I wish I had asked again what made him give me that package on board the steamer and why he wanted me to mail a letter to his own address in Potsdam."

"I know what he would have said," laughed Leon. "He would have given you the same answer he did when you asked him if he was going to Birmingham to see the rifles."

"What did he say?"

" 'I can not tell you that.' Don't worry about him, Earl. He told us to be sure to look him up when we came to London. You may do that but I am not going to be here long enough to waste any time on him. I want to go to France and I am going within two or three days."

Earl was thinking of Philip Alden and did not fully realize just what his brother was saying at the time.

CHAPTER IV

A PIECE OF PAPER

AN hour later when Earl went up the stairway to his room on the floor above he was surprised as he passed through the corridor to notice that a light was showing through his transom. His brother had said that he was going to walk again on the old wall before he retired for the night. Earl had not joined him, explaining that he was fully ready for bed after his exercises of the day. "You know, Leon," he said, laughing, "I am not such an athlete as you are."

"I understand your weakness," replied Leon demurely. "The last word father said to me was to be sure to look after my feeble little brother."

When Earl made as if he was about to leap upon Leon the latter ran laughingly out to the street and disappeared from sight.

Startled as Earl was by the unexpected sight of a light burning in his room, he gave it no thought until he came near and overheard the voices of two men in conversation. Still more mystified by his discovery he was somewhat startled when he

recognized the voice of one of the speakers as that of Philip Alden. Why was the man in his room? The door was partly open and without hesitating a moment Earl at once entered.

Before him he saw Mr. Alden and an elderly man seated on opposite sides of the small table with what were apparently letters and papers spread out between them.

At the entrance of Earl, Mr. Alden looked up and said quietly, "Thank you for the use of your room."

Earl at first thought the man was joking, but his serious manner soon convinced him that Mr. Alden was speaking in earnest. "I was obliged to give up my own room," explained Mr. Alden, "because some of you enterprising Americans had already engaged it by a message from the steamer before we landed. I had no thought of stopping here, as you know, and just came to get that package I gave you. I thought you would not object to our using your room a few minutes. I saw the door open and so I ventured to make use of your friendship."

"You are welcome," replied Earl quickly. "I did not know you were here. You may stay as long as you want to and I will go back to the parlor."

"Not at all," said Philip Alden, as he rose. "We shall not take your room on any such condition. This is my friend, Mr. Haffner. Very unexpectedly I found him here when I arrived."

Earl shook hands with the man to whom he had been introduced and at once decided there was no mistaking his nationality. He plainly was a German. He was a large man, bearded, somewhat florid of face, and stout. He at once produced an impression of great determination and ability upon the mind of the young American.

Insisting upon adhering to his plan, Earl at once withdrew from the room and returned to the parlor below. There, in reading one of the London papers which he found upon the table, he became deeply interested in an account which he found of Count von Moltke, the chief of staff of the German army and by that fact also in command of the Kaiser's troops.

"General Helmuth von Moltke is probably the most picturesque of the many high officers in Europe. He saw active service in the Franco-Prussian war forty-four years ago and highly distinguished himself. From the first he has been a great favorite with the Kaiser. Indeed his appointment as chief of staff was in fact a declaration on the Kaiser's part that the army was to be

run along lines of the old school, that is the 'mailed-fist' was to be used. And yet it is said that when the Kaiser gave General von Moltke his high place in the army he told him that in the event of war he would be replaced.

"General von Moltke was born May 23, 1848, in Gersdorf, Mecklenburg. He attended the gymnasium at Rendsberg, and became a cornet April 1, 1869. In 1870 he was promoted to be lieutenant and took part with distinction in the war against France, being decorated with the iron cross of the second class. In 1881 he was made captain of the general staff and in the following year was made second adjutant to the chief of the general staff of the army. When the Field Marshal retired Captain von Moltke became a major of the line. When the Field Marshal died in 1891 he became aide-de-camp to the Kaiser.

"In 1896 he became major-general and commandant at Potsdam. He has been chief of the general staff of the army since February 16, 1904. The chief whom he succeeded was Count von Schliffen. The latter was nearly seventy-three years old, and had been kicked not long before by a horse and was somewhat crippled. The rule of the general staff is that no one not physically sound may remain on it. Even fat men are ex-

cluded from this most honored department of the army."

Earl's eyes were drooping as he read and it was only with an effort that he could keep himself awake. He laid the paper once more upon the table as Mr. Alden entered saying, "Here you are. I have been looking for you. Your room is free. We thank you very much for your kindness." As he spoke Mr. Alden took up the paper which Earl had been reading, his glance falling upon the article which described the commander of the Kaiser's forces.

"Have you read that?" he inquired, as he turned to the boy.

"Yes."

"Count von Moltke is a great man," said Alden with conviction. "If Germany and England ever declare war against each other they will know more about this man than they do now."

To Earl there seemed to be almost a threat implied in the quietly spoken words and in surprise he looked up into the face of the man.

"Do you think England and Germany will be at war?"

"I cannot tell you that," replied Mr. Alden, again using his favorite expression. "Strange things as that have happened."

"I hope they will not go into it this summer while we are here," laughed Earl.

"Stranger things than that too have happened," repeated Mr. Alden.

Again puzzled by the words as well as the manner of the man, Earl arose and bidding him goodnight at once withdrew and went to his room.

When he entered he found the chairs and table all restored to the places they had occupied before the uninvited guests had taken possession. He was still thinking of the words of Mr. Alden. Somehow in spite of his attempt to convince himself that the man had spoken lightly, a feeling of anxiety remained in the heart of the boy. Did the strange man know of important secrets which as yet were hidden from others? There was a peculiar tone in Mr. Alden's voice which Earl was sure would enable him to distinguish it even if he should hear it in the midst of a crowd. This evening the tone had been more sharp and incisive than he had heard it before.

As the boy moved about his room suddenly he saw upon his desk a page of thin paper upon which some strange markings had been copied. Without any thought that the paper belonged to his recent visitors Earl held it between himself and the light and saw faintly traced the outline of what

appeared to be embankments or earth-works. The lines, however, still meant nothing to him and he did not in any way connect the paper he had found with Mr. Alden and his companion.

Earl was tired from the excitement of the day as well as by his ride from Liverpool and his walk along the old wall at Chester. Giving no more thought to the thin paper he had found, he thrust it into his pocket as he hung his coat in the closet.

In a brief time he was in bed and so soundly asleep that he did not hear his brother when he returned and entered the adjoining room, although the door between the two rooms had been left open.

The following day Mr. Alden departed after he had again urged the boys to look up the address he had given them as soon as they should come to London.

"My comings and goings are somewhat uncertain," he explained, "but I shall leave directions at my office so that you will have no trouble. I am expecting to be there when you arrive and if I do I shall make it my pleasure to assist you in seeing the wonders of the largest city in the world."

"I do not think I shall stop in London now," explained Leon, "I have decided that I shall leave Earl here and go directly on to Paris. I am very

much interested in aëroplanes and I want to study some of the French machines. I have heard they are the best in the world."

"They are not the best," said Mr. Alden solemnly.

"The best ones are made in Germany, aren't they?" said Leon with a smile.

"Yes, they are," replied Mr. Alden, unmoved by the laugh of the boy. "I shall hope to see you soon. Good-by to each of you."

"Did you mean that?" demanded Earl to his brother as soon as the man was gone.

"Did I mean what?"

"That you are going to leave me here and go on to Paris now? I think father expects you to stay here ten days or more."

"I am afraid he will be disappointed," laughed Leon. "He is so anxious for us to develop self-reliance that I think I shall please him by beginning my experiences at once. I think I am depending too much on my brother. But seriously," continued Leon, "I do not care about Rugby, or Oxford or Cambridge. I have all the school I want when I am home. I want to go to France and get a motorcycle to try out some of those wonderful roads."

In apparent indifference Earl replied, "I shall

do my best to keep up while you are gone. Write me at London and let me know where to meet you two weeks from to-day."

True to his word Leon departed early in the afternoon on his journey to London.

Left to himself Earl soon decided that he would remain in the quaint little city of Chester only until the following day and then on his bicycle would make a journey to Rugby. The boy, however, could not dream of the exciting experiences which were to befall him before he and Leon were to meet again.

CHAPTER V

THE PIGEONS

THE following morning, thoroughly rested and ready for his long ride, Earl prepared to depart from Chester. His plan was to stop at Rugby nearly one hundred miles away. He was prepared to ride slowly through the country and to stop when night overtook him at some one of the many attractive little English inns.

From Rugby the young American planned to go directly to Great Yarmouth on the eastern coast. Near the old fishing town some of the members of his father's family were living. To them he had promised to pay a brief visit while his brother was visiting an uncle and aunt in France, relatives of his mother.

It was a beautiful ride, and one which the boy never forgot, as he proceeded leisurely through the Midlands. The farm houses and barns, many of them having thatched roofs, the fertile soil which was cultivated almost to the very tops of the low hills, the smooth narrow roads bordered

with trees, the flowers which grew in abundance about even the humblest abode, all appealed to the eager young traveler.

"England certainly is the most beautiful land on earth," he said to himself again and again when he had passed some great estate or stopped in some quaint little village.

In the fields were hundreds of flocks of sheep and the horses and cattle all appeared to be not merely well-bred but well-fed.

It was difficult for Earl to understand many of the expressions which were spoken in reply to his questions.

"Nothing" was frequently called "nothink," "to be" was "tibe" and the frequent dropping of the *h* at the end of a word was atoned for by placing it at the beginning of another word which did not require such a letter.

All these expressions, however, were mostly confined to the country region.

The second day when he had stopped at noon at a little inn to obtain some luncheon, the young woman who was the clerk of the hotel and cashier as well, said to him with great pride, "Hi 'ave a brother in Hamerica."

"Is that so?" said Earl cordially. "Where does he live?"

"He lives near Broadway. May'ap you 'ave seen him."

"What is his name?" inquired Earl seriously.

"We mostly call him 'Enry, though some people call 'im 'Arry."

"I do not remember meeting him," said Earl, the expression of his face still serious.

"Maybe then you 'ave met my other brother," continued the interested young woman.

"Where does he live?"

"In Brazil."

"That is in South America."

"That's wot I says. Both my brothers live in Hamerica. If ever you 'appens to meet the b'ys you might say as 'ow their sister sends 'er kind regards. We 'ave many Hamericans wot stop here," she continued. "You must be great travelers."

"The English people are great travelers too," suggested Earl pleasantly.

"So we are," the girl replied. "I went to Sulgrave Manor one time. That is in Northamptonshire."

"Yes, I know," said Earl with a smile. "That is the place where the family of George Washington came from."

"So Hi 'ave 'eard."

When Earl resumed his journey he was smiling as he recalled the statements of the young woman. Already he had met several people who had spoken of America as if it was no larger than the little land of England.

Perhaps a little feeling of pride crept into his heart as he thought of the extent of the great country in which he had his home. A single State of the Union was as large as England.

It was not yet dusk when Earl arrived at Great Yarmouth. As soon as he had secured his lodging he walked down to the long lines of the docks where the incoming fishing fleet was now discharging its cargo. The odor of fish was in the air. Hundreds of barrels before him were being filled with mackerel which had been caught in the shallow waters near the coast.

In reply to his inquiry he was informed that more fish were shipped to London markets from Great Yarmouth and Great Grimsby than any other places on the British coast.

Deeply interested he watched the men as they filled the barrels which then were speedily transported to the waiting cars. When dusk came he returned to his quaint hotel and soon after dinner retired to his room.

Early the following morning he resumed his

ride on his bicycle. He was planning to stop at Lowestoft, ten miles down the coast where his father's cousin was the owner of a large pottery.

He had not gone more than half the distance, however, when a shower which for some time had been threatening compelled him to seek shelter. The nearest house was plainly the cottage of a fisherman not far before him. In a brief time the young traveler arrived at the door and in response to his plea for shelter he was admitted by an old woman and a young girl evidently her granddaughter, who bade him welcome.

For a time he tried to draw either of them into conversation, but his uniform response was "So I 'ave 'eard."

At last when the shower passed and Earl stepped outside the house to see if it was safe for him to resume his journey, he was surprised to see his girl-hostess near a dove-cote which stood a few yards behind the house. He would not have noticed the place had it not been for the flocks of pigeons which even now were hovering about it. In a moment he saw that the birds were alighting upon the arms and shoulders and even upon the head of the girl who stood holding a basket on her arm. Even while he was waiting, an old man, a sailor, Earl concluded if the man's

dress and appearance were to be believed, approached the girl and spoke to her in a low voice.

Interested at once in the sight Earl walked quickly to the place where the girl was standing and said, "What a wonderful flock you have. Some of them are pouters and some are fan-tails, I see," he added as he looked around at the birds which were fluttering about his feet. And well he might have been surprised at the beauty of the pigeons. Never before had he seen such a flock.

"Some of the birds is carriers," suggested the girl as she opened her basket, displaying three birds.

Taking one of these in her hands she held it up while the old sailor carefully tied a small missive or paper to one of its legs.

"Where do they go?" inquired Earl, deeply interested in the proceeding.

"Lunnon, most like," said the old man quickly.

"How long a flight is that?"

"Better nor a 'undred miles."

"Is that where all three birds are going?"

"If so be that they meet with no mis'ap," replied the sailor.

As the man spoke Earl turned quickly and looked keenly at him. The voice did not sound like that of an old man. And stranger yet it re-

AN OLD MAN, A SAILOR, APPROACHED THE GIRL AND SPOKE TO HER IN A LOW VOICE.

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minded him of the voice of someone he knew. At the time, however, it was impossible for him to recall or locate what had so vaguely been aroused in his thoughts.

When he looked again at the man he was convinced that the old sailor was regarding him keenly. What could be the meaning of the strange meeting? Was the old man different from what he appeared to be?

Earl was silent for a time as he watched the girl and her companion take from the basket one of the remaining birds and fasten another small note around its leg and toss the pigeon into the air.

All three stood watching the bird as it swept in circles about the place. These circles became wider as the bird rose higher into the air and then darted swiftly toward the sea.

"I thought you said those birds were going to London," said Earl, who was the first to speak after the flight of the second bird.

"So I did say," replied the old man, not looking at Earl as he spoke. "They will make Lunnon in about two hours or less."

"But they did not start in the direction of London," protested Earl.

"Most likely they be looking for the proper cur-

rent. Maybe you don't know that there are streams in the skies same as be in the North Sea."

As he spoke the old man took the third bird from the basket and prepared to attach a note to its leg. As he did so Earl moved closer upon him so interested was he in the proceeding. Earl's excitement as well as his consternation was great when his eyes fell upon the little missive. Although it was hastily turned over by the sailor, Earl was convinced that he had seen the directions written upon the little envelope. Unless his eyes deceived him the little missive was directed to Philip Alden. But Earl had been unable to see more than the mere name and even of that a moment later he was inclined to think he must have been dreaming.

CHAPTER VI

SUBMARINES

APPARENTLY Earl's interest in the task in which the old sailor was engaged did not arouse any special curiosity on the part of the latter. In a moment he had tossed the third bird into the air. Again the pigeon circled high above the place preparatory to its long flight in the same direction as that in which its two predecessors had departed.

Earl watched the bird until it was a tiny speck in the sky and then no longer could be seen.

"It still seems strange to me," he said, "why those birds should start as they did if they are going to London."

Earl fancied that the young girl looked quickly at her companion, but she did not reply to his question.

"Now," said the sailor, apparently giving no heed to the suggestion of the young stranger, "we will see what can be done for some o' these other birds."

In response to his call the birds flocked about

him, alighting upon his shoulders and fluttering about his feet as a few minutes before they had gathered about the girl. The fan-tails strutted in pride and the breasts of the pouters swelled out as if they were doing their utmost to attract the attention of their friend.

At last the task of caring for the birds was completed and the old sailor remarked that he must be "goin'," as his trawler would soon start.

"Most of the men up here are fishermen, aren't they?" inquired Earl.

"Mos'ly," replied the sailor; "some work in the fishhooks and some makes nets."

"That is a good business," laughed Earl, "for people who live up here on the coast."

"'Tis plenty o' hard work, if that's what you mean," snorted the sailor. "'Tis mighty big work and mighty small pay. That's the reason so many of these boys become jackies."

"Do a good many of these boys go into the British navy?"

"The best sailors wot old England has come from Yarmouth and Great Grimsby. The school-in' wot they get 'ere is the best in the world."

"Probably that's the reason why England has the best navy in the world, then," laughed Earl good-naturedly.

"That's not the 'reason.' The reason why England wants a navy twice as big as any other two nations is because she is shut out here in the sea. She has to protect herself against invasion from any country."

"She has a good many fleets," suggested Earl.

"So she has," said the sailor. "There is the Channel fleet, the Atlantic, the North American West Indies, what is regular fleets. Then in the east she has her China fleet, another one in Australia, another in the East Indies and still another off the Cape of Good Hope. Then o' course she has the 'Ome fleet which is the most important of all. There is the Portsmouth fleet too, and the Devenport and the Nore. I am thinkin' every one o' 'em is more important than the other two." The old man spoke solemnly as if what he had said was literally true. Throughout the conversation the sailor had apparently been watching the sea. He had seldom looked at the young visitor and as soon as he had completed his statement of the various fleets composing the British navy he said quickly, "Yonder is my trawler. They will be signalin' for me pretty quick."

"That isn't your boat," spoke up the girl quickly.

Earl thought he saw a glance of anger from the

old sailor at the interruption, but the old man hesitated a moment as he said, "My eyes is gettin' old. I guess that isn't my skipper after all. Speakin' o' ships," he continued without looking at Earl as he spoke, "I sometimes wonder what would 'appen off 'ere in the North Sea if Great Britain and Germany should send their fleets 'ere in war time."

"My, that would be a fight worth seeing, wouldn't it!" said Earl eagerly.

"No, sir," said the old man solemnly shaking his head. "It would be most the most awfullest sight wot I ever see. When Sir Francis fought the Spanish Armada he used to send his fire-ships into the fleet. I am thinkin' the Spaniards was scared as much as they was 'urt, but now up 'ere in the North Sea it is recorded as 'ow old England has twenty dreadnoughts."

"How many has Germany?"

"She's said to have thirteen. England has twenty-two predreadnoughts to Germany's twelve."

"That's a pretty big handicap for the Kaiser."

"So it might seem. Old England has four battle cruisers up here to Germany's three and there are fifteen armored cruisers in the British fleet and only four in the German. Besides the Ger-

man ships haven't any guns larger than twelve-inch caliber."

"How about the English guns?"

"England has at least ten ships in commission, every one of 'em carrying thirteen and one-half inch guns."

"Do you really suppose the Kaiser would ever be so foolish as to pit his fleet against that of Great Britain?"

"That's no tellin'. Germany has a good many submarines and a big fleet of torpedo-boat destroyers. If she could use those in putting some of those cruisers and dreadnoughts out o' commission the fight wouldn't last very long."

"Have you ever seen a submarine work?" inquired Earl.

"I can't say as 'ow I 'ave," said the sailor, shaking his head.

"Well, I have," said Earl somewhat proudly.

The sailor glanced quickly at him, but he again withdrew his gaze as he said, "In America do they let youngsters like you go down in a submarine?"

"I didn't mean to say that I have gone down in one," said Earl quickly, "but I have watched the building of some of them."

"'Ow's that?"

"Why I spent one summer near the place where

Mr. Holland was having the first one built, that is, I mean the first one that succeeded."

"Who might Mr. 'Olland be?"

"Why he was a school teacher in Ireland who tried very hard to get his country to take up the matter of building submarines, but he could not do it. Finally he came over to America. I heard him say one day that when he was a boy in Ireland nothing interested him so much as the wonderful things in the English navy and he used to lie awake nights thinking how any other navy could overthrow it. He knew that every one of the great nations was building battleships and if all built ships then there was likely to be a big fight some time. He thought if he could build some boat which could destroy the battleships then it might put a stop to war between the nations, so he went to work on his plan for a submarine."

"When was that, might I hask?"

"Why it was about the time the *Merrimac* and the *Monitor* had their fight in Hampton Roads."

The sailor shook his head as if he did not understand the reference and Earl eagerly continued, "When Mr. Holland found he couldn't interest the Irish people in building a submarine, as I said, he came over to America and taught school. He used to spend a good part of every night and most

of his holidays working on his plan. Finally after a Frenchman furnished him the money Mr. Holland built his first boat. It had a clumsy, dinky little engine and the diving-rudder was in the middle. It was not long before he found out that was exactly where the rudder ought not to be."

"'Ow big was 'is boat?"

"It was fourteen and one-half feet long and three feet wide. The operator had a compartment in the center of the boat and he was supposed to wear a diver's suit. The boat had a double shell. The space between was an air chamber. By working this air chamber Mr. Holland thought he could raise or lower the boat in the water. He used compressed air. When he began his experiments the boat all the time was breaking down and he then saw that he would have to have a different kind of machinery, so he began another boat. That was thirty-one feet long, a good deal larger than his first one. A good many people watched him while he was at work and he was afraid some of them were trying to steal his ideas, so he said he wouldn't admit any more to his workshop. A newspaper reporter tried to go in one day and when Mr. Holland wouldn't let him in he went away and wrote a cock and bull story that the Fenians were building

a boat which would cross the Irish Sea under water and destroy the whole English navy. The newspaper man called the boat the *Fenian Ram* and that name stuck to it until the boat was found to be no good.

"Finally Mr. Holland got the United States Navy to open a competition for plans for a submarine. After he had tried one or two plans he built a boat fifty-three feet and ten inches long and ten feet and three inches in diameter. On the surface of the water she was driven by a fifty horse-power gasoline engine. When she was under the water she had a fifty horse-power electric motor at work. They claimed she could make five and one-half knots an hour under the water. She had a torpedo tube on her bow and a pneumatic dynamite gun and could carry three torpedoes. I have heard Mr. Holland tell my father how he felt when he took the boat out for its first trial."

"When was that, might I hask?" inquired the sailor.

"In 1898. Mr. Holland said that when they cast off and the motor was started it did not take long to come to the course marked out for their test. He said he then filled the trimming-tanks and started the boat down. He said her nose went under all right, but the stern stood out of the

water and when he tried it the second time the same thing happened. Then they whistled for help and took on more ballast and then the submarine behaved all right. The Government took her right away and now they have a good many more."

"So have other countries, I 'ear," said the sailor. "If Germany tried to use any of her submarines on our fleet she'd find that old England has a few on 'and, too. Wot a great sight it would be to see two of those divers fighting under the water!"

"I don't know where you would get your sight," laughed Earl. "I wonder where a man would stand to see a fight between two submarines."

The old man said no more and as he departed Earl turned in surprise as he saw that the young girl had remained throughout the interview.

CHAPTER VII

AT THE INN

"WHO was your pigeon-flyer?" he asked.

"Uncle Silas," she replied.

Earl laughed because the name perhaps was as descriptive as a more specific one would have been. Plainly the man was a stranger and yet somehow his voice still perplexed Earl whenever he recalled his words.

"I must be going on my way," said Earl as he handed a sixpence to his young hostess and thanked her for the shelter which had been provided during the storm.

It was not long before he arrived at the home of his father's cousin. Great was his surprise, however, to find that the people were all away. The letter which he had sent to inform them of his proposed visit had failed to arrive before their departure for South America.

Declining the invitation which was given him by the butler to remain, Earl resumed his journey. The boy was not grievously disappointed at

the failure of his visit, as all the members of the family were strangers to him.

Following the storm the morning sun shed a special glory upon sea and land. The region through which he was passing did not appeal to him as being quite as beautiful as that which he had seen in the Midlands and yet as it was all new it was deeply interesting.

Earl decided that he would not attempt to make a long journey nor would he ride swiftly through the interesting country.

When noon-hour arrived he stopped at another little inn. How attractive the English country inns were, he thought. While he was waiting for his luncheon he walked about the little garden in the court. Some of the beds of flowers were in bloom and the pheasants in their cages seemed to have plumage more brilliant than any he had ever seen.

When he entered the quaint little dining-room, from his seat by the window he could look far out over the waters of the North Sea. Long, low trails of smoke indicated the course of steamers far in the distance. Dun-colored sailboats were dashing over the waters that now were capped with white. The fishing fleet, perhaps the very one to which the old sailor whom he had met be-

longed, held his attention for a time as he watched the passing of the swift little boats.

His thoughts were diverted by the coming of two men who were seated at a little table in front of the window nearest his own. The men were strangers but the young American was deeply interested in the manners and customs of the people and perhaps was staring more than he was aware at the two guests. At all events one of the strangers, a man apparently forty years of age, returned his stare until Earl was compelled to lower his eyes.

It was impossible, however, for him not to overhear certain parts of the conversation that followed. His surprise was great when he noticed that at times the men conversed in German and then again in English. His own knowledge of German was sufficient to enable him to understand an occasional word, but the most of the conversation did not appeal to him and he did not desire even to appear to be listening.

Soon one of the men drew some papers from his pocket and one by one handed them to his friend to read.

"Shall I keep these?" inquired the man who had received them.

"If you so desire," replied the other. "I have

many copies. See," he added as he drew from a pocket in his coat a small, flat bundle of papers. These he also spread on the table in front of him and soon both men were conversing in tones so low that Earl could not have heard what they were saying if he had desired.

It was not long before the two men finished their luncheon and departed from the room. With their departure Earl gave no more thought to either of them and once more was watching the waves which now were rising under the strong wind which was blowing. Indeed, the wind was so strong that Earl was compelled to request the little window near him to be closed.

The ruddy-faced girl who waited upon his table smiled when Earl arose and handed her a sixpence as a gratuity.

"Thank you kindly, sir," she said. "You are an American, Hi fancy?"

"How did you know?" laughed Earl as he took his hat and prepared to depart from the room.

"Because all you Americans have such a peculiar form of speech. Hi do not understand why hit is so common for all Americans to speak in such 'igh nasal tones."

"Do we?" inquired Earl somewhat annoyed by the implied slight, and yet smiling good-naturedly

as he spoke. "Well, if we do, it is probably a habit we have fallen into something like that which I find in England where I notice so many of your good people leaving off the hs where they belong and putting them on where they do not belong."

"Upon my word," said the waitress seriously, "Hi never thought of that. We do misuse our hs. Pardon me," she continued, "but may I hask if those two gentlemen who were seated near you belonged to your party?"

"Those two next to the window?"

"Yezzar."

"No, they were strangers to me."

"I beg pardon," the waitress continued, much to Earl's surprise, "but did you 'appen to 'ear wot the subject of their conversation was?"

"I was not listening to their conversation," said Earl sharply as once more he turned to depart.

"Tibe sure there 'appens tibe a special reason for my hasking the question. My reason for hasking," continued the loquacious waitress, "is because Hi wanted to find out if they were the two men who are hinterested in the fantails."

"Are all men in this part of the country pigeon fanciers?" laughed Earl as he recalled his experiences of the early morning.

"It is quite a fad, sir."

"What do they raise mostly?"

"Fantails and pouters. The gentleman who wanted me to hascertain if the two men who were seated near you had come to see his pigeon-cotes is one of the best-known fanciers in England."

"I do not think they were talking about pigeons," laughed Earl. This time he turned away and walked through the hallway into the court where he had been deeply interested in the pheasants and flowers.

As he entered he saw the two men who had been seated near him in the dining-room. Apparently both were engaged in a very earnest conversation, for their voices were low and they were unaware of Earl's approach. The young American would scarcely have noticed their presence had not the waitress made her inquiry concerning them. At that very moment he was convinced that he heard one of them use the word "pigeon." The fact caused him to look once more at the men and he wondered if he had not been mistaken.

The two strangers did not long remain in the court as Earl noticed when he continued his walk along the narrow booths. How much the little gardens added to the attractiveness of the inn. Scarcely a house had he found in England, even though it was the abode of the most humble, which

did not have its little window-garden or the rose-bush climbing the wall.

As he looked up he saw that the two men were gone and without any further thought of either he retraced his way to the door by which he had entered.

As he came near he saw a slip of paper on the ground near him. When he took it up he saw that it was thin and as he held it before him he noticed that there were tracings upon it. The fact caused him to look more closely and in a moment he was convinced that the lines were similar, at least, to those on the paper which he had found in his room after the visit of Philip Alden and his friend. In a moment, however, convincing himself that it was only a coincidence and that the paper he held in his hands meant nothing he thrust it into his pocket thinking that when he paid his bill he would hand the paper he had found to the proprietor. Apparently it was of little value and yet it was fresh and clean and it might be that someone had lost it who would be glad to have it returned.

When, however, the time for his departure came Earl forgot all about the paper he had found. He little knew how much his discovery would concern his own safety in the near future.

CHAPTER VIII

PHILIP ALDEN'S PIGEONS

LONG before Earl arrived at the great city he decided to forward his bicycle and enter London by train. It was his first visit to the largest city in the world.

Already he had found in his journey from Liverpool, that, although the English and Americans were alike in many ways, there were also many matters in which they were very different. Once or twice he had narrowly escaped a collision on the road because he had turned to the right instead of to the left as is the custom for vehicles in England when they meet. He had had difficulty too in understanding the words of some of the people whom he had met in his rides through the country regions.

He was therefore convinced that the better way would be for him to arrive in London by train. At the station he could secure a cab which would take him to his destination. He had already telegraphed for a room at the Victoria Hotel so that he had no anxiety about his lodgings.

At last when the swift train arrived at the station, Earl was surprised to see all the people in his compartment take their boxes and prepare to leave the car, or "carriage" as the English call it.

"Is this London?" he inquired of one of the men.

"Yezzar."

Still only partly convinced, Earl followed the departing passengers and then was told that tickets on the English railways do not read from a certain station to London, but to a certain station in the great city.

In a brief time he secured a cab and was driven to his hotel. His surprise was great as he passed through the streets to notice how filled they were with cabs and buses.

Earl Platt found his first few days in London of great interest. He hired a taxicab and rode across London Bridge, visited London Tower and many of the places which are of special interest to Americans when they for the first time visit the land from which the founders of America came.

He had received one letter from Leon, which announced his safe arrival in the suburb of Paris where his uncle and aunt resided. The letter contained a very cordial and even urgent invitation

for Earl to join his brother, but he was not yet ready to leave the land and the great city which he had found intensely interesting.

On the fourth day after his arrival he recalled the invitation which Philip Alden had given him to report at a certain address on Fleet Street. Earl had been so busy in his various visits to places of interest that he had scarcely thought of the man who had puzzled him so much even before the ship had arrived at Liverpool.

There was no special reason why he should impose himself upon his good-nature, Earl assured himself, but as he had nothing special to occupy his time that day he decided to call upon the man who was so urgent in his invitation.

Securing a seat on the top of a bus he rode down the Strand, impressed by the crowds that seemed almost to fill the street from one side to the other. How the bus managed to escape collision he could not understand. The steady, hurrying tide of people swept back and forth, but the traffic regulations were carefully obeyed and there was seldom any trouble for any of the vehicles.

Passing on into Fleet Street Earl soon arrived at the address he was seeking. His first impression was that it was strange that a man should have his office at the address which Philip Alden

had given him. Earl was compelled to go up several flights of stairs, and on the door of a back room on the top floor he found the number for which he was looking.

The building was old and the hall was dimly lighted. Before he opened the door he recalled the fact that not once had Philip Alden referred to his occupation. Nor had he given the young American any information concerning the reasons for the long journeys which he had taken.

In response to Earl's rap the door was opened by a small boy whose rows of buttons served to emphasize his diminutive size. Earl laughed as the boy bade him enter and he said, "Is this Mr. Alden's office?"

"It is, sir," replied the boy pompously. "Are you expected?"

"Yes, and no," laughed Earl. "Mr. Alden told me to report here and so here I am."

"Be seated, sir," said the boy, waving his hand toward two or three partly broken and dingy chairs that stood in a row at one side of the wall.

When the boy withdrew to learn whether or not Mr. Alden would receive his visitor, Earl looked about the office with interest. If Philip Alden was in business there was nothing to indicate that his

business was of importance or was extensive. Two or three broken filing-cases rested upon the top of the rickety desk at which a bookkeeper might have been sitting to write. No bookkeeper, however, was to be seen. The appearance of the walls and the ceiling was most untidy. If soap and water had been applied recently it must be of a kind that was not effective, Earl assured himself as he smilingly looked about him. His meditation was interrupted, however, by the appearance of Mr. Alden from the inner office to which the door was closed when Earl had entered the outer room.

"Good morning, my young friend," said Mr. Alden quietly. "I have been expecting you these two or three days."

"You are very good," responded Earl. "I did not want to bother a busy man."

"Let me tell you one thing. No Englishman ever invites another to his home or to his office without meaning every word he speaks. You people in the States have a way of saying to your friends 'Come and see me,' but you know before you speak that they do not expect to come and that you would be surprised if they should. Over here it is different."

"Thank you, sir," said Earl with a smile.

"What have you on hand this morning?"

"Nothing special. That was one reason why I looked you up."

"I am glad you did. I am just about to take a motor and go to one of the suburbs. It is about twelve miles out. If you care to accompany me I shall be pleased to have you come with me."

"Thank you," said Earl cordially, "I shall be glad to do that very thing."

"Very well," said Mr. Alden. "I shall be ready within a few minutes and we shall at once start."

A half-hour later Earl took his seat beside his companion in the motor which was awaiting him in the street.

The chauffeur, apparently unmindful of the congested street, worked his way in and out among the myriads of cabs and buses and soon was at Trafalgar Square. He did not stop there, however, but through Pall Mall made his way to Piccadilly Circus and then sped up Oxford Street at a rate of speed which astonished the young American.

Turning abruptly the driver then made his way past Hyde Park and then sped swiftly forward toward the open country.

Earl was passing through a part of London which as yet he had not seen. It was all most interesting and he seldom spoke to his companion

except to ask an occasional question or to respond to a suggestion Philip Alden made as to certain buildings or places which he must see.

It was not long before Earl was aware that they were passing out of the congested part of the city and soon afterward came to the more open country. Swiftly the car sped through the little hamlets, which were frequent, and then came to the open road.

"This is where I stop," said Mr. Alden when at a word from him the chauffeur halted the car before a little farmhouse.

When Earl saw the quaint little structure he noticed in its rear a huge dove-cote. The sight recalled his experiences near Lowestoft and he remembered the words that had been spoken about the young men in England who were pigeon-fanciers. Somehow the voice of the old sailor seemed again to be sounding in his ears as Earl heard Mr. Alden say to him, "Are you interested in pigeons? If so, you may like to come with me. This is my one weakness," he added with a smile. "A man who is as busy as I am cannot afford to have many fads. I cannot keep pigeons in my chambers very well, so I have to have them bred for me out here. All these you see are mine."

For an hour the man remained talking with the

woman who was in charge of the birds. Earl's interest in part was gone after a half-hour had elapsed and he seated himself in a chair near the front door. Mr. Alden still was having many consultations with the woman and to Earl it seemed they must be important because of the earnest tones in which he was speaking.

At last Philip Alden came to the place where Earl was awaiting his coming and said pleasantly, "I must apologize for detaining you so long. When I come out here I am prone to forget that other people are not as deeply interested as I in my pet hobby."

"I never saw finer birds," said Earl cordially.

"And you never will. If you were going directly to America I might arrange to let you have two or three pairs so that you might have the beginning of a flock in your home."

"Thank you. I am beginning to wish you were an American."

"You have decided that I am not?"

"Yes, sir."

"What do you think I am now, an Englishman?"

"I am beginning to think so, although a little while ago I thought you might be a German."

"Let me see," said Mr. Alden quizzically. "You

are sure that I am not a Chinaman and you have now come to the conclusion that I am not an American. I must therefore either be a German or an Englishman. Thank you," said Mr. Alden, turning abruptly to the woman who at that moment approached with a basket in her hand. "I will take these birds with me and send them direct from London." Turning once more to Earl he explained, "I am shipping to a friend of mine a few birds of high degree."

"What kind are they?" inquired Earl.

"There are three or four pairs," replied Mr. Alden, apparently ignoring the direct question. "The woman here has no facilities for shipping them so I am frequently compelled to take them back with me to town and send them from there."

Earl looked with interest at the basket in which he could see there were several birds. He did not mean to be impolite, but he was unable to conceal his surprise when he saw that the basket of birds was to be sent to the little hamlet on the shore of the North Sea near Lowestoft, where he himself had watched not long before the flight of the carrier birds.

CHAPTER IX

THE CAR BEHIND

EARL was silent and thoughtful several minutes after the start for London had been made.

He was perplexed and mystified by what he had seen, but as yet he had not fully connected the various events that had impressed him and his feeling toward Mr. Alden was chiefly one of perplexity. Why should the flight of the carrier pigeons from the coast of the North Sea and the shipping of a basket of the birds from a little hamlet outside London cause him to be suspicious that all was not right? Surely Mr. Schwartz, who had given his father the letter for him to present to Philip Alden, must have known all about the man, or he would not have volunteered as he did.

For a moment it seemed to Earl that the distance between England and America was much greater than when he had crossed the ocean. Three thousand miles of water between himself and his home! And there was no way of returning except as he had come. If he should fall into

trouble there was no one upon whom he could rely, for a time at least. It was the first time in the boy's experience when he realized that the problems confronting him must be solved by himself alone.

In a moment, however, his anxiety departed, when his companion quietly said to him, "Did you read the papers this morning?"

"No," replied Earl. "Was there anything of special importance?"

"There was," replied Philip Alden. The tone of his voice was so serious that Earl was startled in spite of the quiet manner of his companion.

"What was it?" he asked quickly.

"The Grand Duke Francis Ferdinand of Austria and his consort the Duchess of Hohenberg were murdered yesterday."

"Is that so!" exclaimed Earl. He did not know who the people were to whom his companion referred but the fact that a European ruler had been assassinated was by no means new. He had heard of similar occurrences several times before. Nor did the boy attach any special importance to the declaration. Least of all did he think that his own fortunes might be seriously bound up in the crime which had been perpetrated.

"It is the most serious thing which has hap-

pened in twenty-five years!" said Mr. Alden seriously.

"Why?"

"No one can say what the end of it will be. All Europe is in such a condition that it is very much like a powder-magazine. A spark might explode the whole country."

"Where were they killed?" inquired Earl.

"At Serajevo."

"Who killed them?"

"I do not know just who the conspirators were. Grand Duke Francis Ferdinand has been in favor of ruling the Slavs with a strong hand. No doubt some of them are behind it, although it may be possible too that the crime may be traced to those who are high in authority."

"Why did they want to kill him?" repeated Earl. "I do not see what they can hope to gain."

"Some deluded person thought he would imitate the spirit of Charlotte Corday and free his country from one who was threatening it. Poor fools! The ring leader has been taken, at least the assassin who threw the bomb, but he may be no more to blame than the hound dog that follows the track of a rabbit."

Still Earl was not seriously impressed by the words of his companion, although he had been

shocked by the report of the violent death of the Grand Duke and his consort.

"The result will be that Austria will be compelled to be harder than ever upon the Slavs."

"Tell me who these Slavs are. I do not just understand," said Earl.

"Strictly speaking it is a race name. We speak of the German and the Slav races. It is a little hard to say just where the Slavs are, but in a general way they include all the people of Russia except the Germans and the Jews, the people of Bulgaria, Servia, Montenegro and the Poles, Czechs, Moravians, most of the people of Roumania and more than half the population of Austria-Hungary. Since the Balkan war Servia has been very ambitious."

"They are good fighters, aren't they?" inquired Earl.

"Yes, they were good fighters but they have now become so ambitious that they think they are a good deal larger than they are. Austria has been having trouble with Montenegro and Bulgaria."

"For what?" inquired Earl.

"Why they wanted to throw off all the restrictions of trade that she has placed on them."

"What do you think will come of this?"

"No man can say, but it may lead to very serious consequences. Germany is compelled to stand by Austria if the latter is attacked; and if Austria should make war upon Servia, Russia may stand behind the little Slav country. The war if it comes may be one between the Germans and the Slavs."

"Why should Germany want to go into the war?"

"I don't know that she does, but she has given her promise to stand by Austria. Besides all that, the question of food for her people is becoming more acute every year for Germany."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Since her war with France in 1870, Germany has gone forward by leaps and bounds. She really is the richest country on the Continent and I think everyone agrees she is the most powerful military state in the world. 'Made in Germany' has become an expression that is known all over the world."

Earl looked in surprise at his companion while he was speaking. He scarcely seemed to be aware of the presence of the boy and his voice was almost like that of one who was speaking to himself.

"Yes," continued Mr. Alden, "while Germany has been building her battleships and stretching her empire, the cost of living for her workers has

gone higher than in any other country in Europe except Hungary. In two years the cost of living increased in Great Britain fifteen per cent., in France fifteen per cent. and in Germany thirty per cent. The cost of living indeed has gone ahead so much faster than the increase in wages that almost all the men who work on salaries are in trouble. The fight has been made worse because the landed proprietors have tried to put a ring around the food market, making the poor people pay tribute on all the grain that was bought outside."

"I have always wanted to go to Germany and I am glad I shall have my chance now," said Earl quickly. "I have always understood that the German soil is very fertile. I don't see why she should not raise all she needs for her people."

"Two-thirds of the soil in Germany is tilled, but in spite of that fact she has to spend more than $1,000,000,000, as you say in the States, every year for food that comes from outside. You in the States have about 100,000,000 of people. This year you will raise nearly that number of bushels of wheat, that is a bushel for every man, woman and child. Germany for her 70,000,000 people is raising only 20,500,000 bushels. You can see from that what might happen if Germany is unable to enlarge her territory."

"She would feel the pinch right away, wouldn't she, if she went to war?"

"No," replied Philip Alden, his eyes flashing as he spoke. "Germany has always provided for war. There are great storehouses all along her military roads and they are kept full of grain all the time. That is done so that Germany may be ready whenever she may be compelled to go to war. Then there is another thing troubling her. Her trade with other countries now amounts to almost $4,000,000,000 per year and the only foreign colonies of any size that she has are the ones in Africa. Worse than that is the fact that for her shipping she has only the Baltic seaboard. So you can see why Germany will be very much interested in anything that affects her in any of these ways."

So interested had Earl been in the conversation of his companion that he had given slight heed to the country through which they were swiftly passing.

An exclamation from the chauffeur at that moment caused Philip Alden to glance quickly behind him. As he did so he drew a pair of field glasses from a small box and turning hastily about without speaking gazed at something far behind him.

Earl, too, turned and looked back, but he was

unable to see any object of special interest unless perhaps it was a touring car far in their rear. It was plain to him that it was moving very swiftly, for in spite of the hardness of the road the car was enveloped in a cloud of dust.

Lowering his glasses Philip Alden in a low voice spoke a few words to the driver but they were in some language which Earl did not understand.

Instantly the car in which they were riding seemed to leap ahead. In a moment it was speeding over the road faster than Earl ever had ridden before. He looked in amazement at Mr. Alden and then at the chauffeur. The expression on the face of each man was set and hard and both were looking straight before them.

Was the car striving to escape from the one in the rear? Earl looked behind him, but the other car was no longer to be seen as a bend in the road had hidden it from sight.

In a brief time, however, the car once more appeared and apparently was moving more swiftly than when first Earl had seen it.

CHAPTER X

PURSUIT

"WHAT is the trouble?" inquired Earl anxiously. "What is wrong?"

Instead of replying to the boy, Philip Alden in a low voice again spoke to the chauffeur.

The car already was moving with terrific speed. It seemed to Earl almost as if they were flying along the narrow country roads. He had noticed that the car was a powerful machine and had been built in France.

Swift, however, as was their flight, the pursuer seemed to be able to maintain an equally swift speed. For several minutes the distance between the two cars apparently was unchanged. The hedgerows were sweeping past them and an occasional scream from some frightened mother as she called to her children was heard, but the place was passed so swiftly that the faces were seen rather than distinguished. Into a town dashed the car still moving at terrific speed. A man with crutches was almost run down while he was cross-

INTO THE TOWN DASHED THE CAR STILL MOVING AT TERRIFIC SPEED.

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ing from one side of the street to the other. Even then the speed of the huge car was not slackened. On and still on bore the huge touring car, and when once more the open country had been gained the glance behind him convinced Earl that as yet the distance between the cars was unchanged.

In a way Earl found himself sharing in the excitement although he was ignorant of its cause. It was plain to him that Philip Alden was deeply aroused. He looked neither to the right nor left, and save for an occasional glance at his pursuers did not turn away his eyes from the speedometer.

Earl, too, looked at the little indicator and saw that they were moving at a rate which did not vary much from fifty-five miles an hour. For half an hour the mad race continued. Earl did not know, but Philip Alden had given directions for the car not to go back to London but to start for the open country. When it had turned to the left Earl had been so engrossed in the pursuing car that he had scarcely noticed the change in their direction. In a few moments, however, it was plain that the pursuing car had made the same turn and doggedly was holding to the chase.

He looked behind him as the automobile swept through a flock of hens in the middle of the road. He saw one young rooster bounding at least three

feet into the air and continuing his strange leaps as long as he remained within sight. Even sympathy for the unfortunate creature gave place to anxiety as the car sharply turned a corner and came almost face to face with a team coming from the opposite direction. The horses reared and leaped into the hedge, barely avoiding a collision. The car raced past, making another sharp turn when two miles more had been covered.

It was soon manifest, however, that the gray car far behind them was clinging to the pursuit for it was still plainly to be seen. A smothered exclamation of anger or dismay fell from the lips of Philip Alden when he saw that he had not been able to shake off his pursuers.

Again at his word the course of the car was changed and on a road hard and smooth which left no trace of the passing wheels they started swiftly toward a little hamlet not far away.

As the car came to the bottom of a low hill there was a sudden loud report and another smothered exclamation of anger fell from the lips of Philip Alden.

There was a blow-out in the tire and it was impossible for the car to proceed, at least at the speed at which it had been moving.

Again several words in a language unknown to

Earl were spoken by the chauffeur and with the speed of the car only slightly checked it was driven hard until a small garage was seen and into it the party instantly turned.

Leaping from their seats both Philip Alden and the driver instantly raised the cover and, turning to the startled proprietor, said, "Shut that door."

Without a protest the man obeyed and the door between the garage and the open road was hastily closed.

Excited and curious to know whether or not the sudden change in the course of their car had been seen by their pursuers, Earl stepped to the low window and eagerly awaited the coming of the huge gray car. In a few moments it was heard approaching and to his relief it sped past the place without any of the three occupants even glancing in the direction of the garage.

"Put that fresh tire on and be quick about it," ordered Philip Alden as he pointed to the tire which was on the side of the car.

"Thank ye kindly, sir," replied the proprietor instantly obeying the command.

"You help him," ordered Philip Alden of the driver. "I will take a hand in it too."

In a moment all three men were busily engaged in their task and the exchange of tires was made.

As soon as the re-tiring was completed Philip Alden advanced into the road and in a moment returned saying, "The coast is all clear. We must start at once."

Hastily pushing back the door he called to Earl to take his place in the car and in a moment the machine was speeding over the road in the direction from which it had come in its mad flight.

Apparently the pursuers had been foiled. When several miles had been covered and no signs of the gray car had been seen, the speed at which they were moving was checked. Then Philip Alden, for the first time since the discovery of the other car, breathed more freely. As he settled back in his seat he turned to Earl and said, "I suppose you are wondering what all this trouble is about."

"Was the other car chasing us?" inquired Earl.

"What made you think it was chasing us?" inquired Philip Alden soberly.

"Because we jumped hard just as soon as the other car was seen, and that didn't seem to be moving very slowly either," Earl replied as he recalled the swiftness of their flight over the country roads.

"That car had nothing to do with us," said Philip Alden.

"It looked very much as if the men who were in it wanted to have some words with you," laughed Earl, who had now recovered from the excitement.

He still was unconvinced that the other car had not been chasing Philip Alden, but why should he be wanted? Had he been guilty of any crime? Earl looked again at his companion, who now was quiet in his manner and seldom spoke. Apparently he was merely a country gentleman leisurely riding through the beautiful region.

"How far are we from London?" inquired Earl.

"Not very far. Are you in haste?"

"I have no special reason for wanting to be back."

"Then we shall go more leisurely," continued Philip Alden as he lifted the basket containing the pigeons from the floor of the car and carefully inspected its contents. "Just a little shaken up, that's all," he remarked as he replaced the basket and glanced keenly at Earl. "I do not know that one suffers any more discomfort from riding at a high speed than one is apt to when one goes more slowly. What made you think that car was pursuing us?"

"I have told you already," said Earl.

"And I have explained to you that you are mistaken," said Philip Alden.

"I have your word for it," laughed Earl. In spite of his non-committal words, however, the young American was convinced that his fears had not been groundless and that the men in the gray car had been in pursuit of the one in which he was riding.

Philip Alden betrayed no alarm and to Earl it seemed almost as if he had no fear of further pursuit.

The boy too became silent and with renewed interest watched the country and people on either side.

When a half-hour had elapsed and still no signs of the great city were to be seen Earl concluded that their flight must have been much further into the country than he at first had thought. Had he been deceived? Was the gray car merely one that was being driven recklessly? The actions of Philip Alden prevented a complete answer to such queries, Earl assured himself. But both the answer and the question did not explain the fear manifest in the face and bearing of his companion.

Philip Alden was a strange man, Earl was convinced of that fact. Several times his suspicions were aroused, as he recalled some of the incidents

in the man's life, that there was something not only mysterious, but wrong. The haste of the pursuing party might be evidence of their desire to secure a man of importance. Earl silently glanced at the face of his companion. The countenance, however, did not betray any alarm and it was plain that if Philip Alden had been eager to escape, he now either controlled that feeling or no longer was afraid.

The conversation, however, had ceased and Earl did not again refer to the chase.

More than an hour passed before he discovered any signs that they were returning to the great city.

"We shall be in time," remarked Philip Alden, as he glanced at his watch. "You said you were in no hurry and I have taken you at your word. It is not often I have an opportunity to take a swift spin in the country. Do you enjoy speeding?"

"Yes, I do sometimes," replied Earl with a laugh.

"We were making good time when that tire blew out. If it had not been for that we should have been back in town long before this, for I was planning to return by another road. However, this is all new to you and I trust has been of some

interest. We shall have you at the Victoria within an hour."

Without any explanation, however, at a word from Philip Alden the car was turned from the road into a driveway which led past a high hedge that concealed all behind it from the view of the passersby.

CHAPTER XI

DOWN THE THAMES

THE speed at which the automobile was moving was much less now and if Philip Alden had been alarmed by what Earl still thought was a pursuit he showed no signs of his feeling. He seldom spoke and Earl could not avoid the suspicion that the man still was watchful of all the cars they met. As for automobiles overtaking them, although the speed, as has been said, had been lowered, not once had any car passed them on the road.

It was a high-powered car and the driver plainly was an expert.

"I have an errand to which I must attend, before we go back into the city," explained Philip Alden after three quarters of an hour had elapsed.

"I shall not mind the wait," said Earl.

"It will not be necessary for you to stay with me. I will have my chauffeur take you directly to the Victoria."

Earl was about to protest, but as he saw any words of his now would be useless he at once ac-

quiesced in the suggestion and in a brief time resumed his journey.

He took his seat now beside the driver and although he attempted on several occasions to engage the man in conversation he did not receive any satisfactory replies. In response to his question as to the business in which Mr. Alden was engaged the man stared blankly at him and in broken English said that he could not understand.

When at last Earl arrived at his hotel and went to his room he thought over the exciting ride of the afternoon.

He still was unable to free himself from the impression that Philip Alden had fled from a pursuing car. And yet the very suggestion was so unreasonable that again and again the perplexed boy assured himself that he must accept the statement which had been given him.

Several days elapsed in which Earl did not again see the man who had so thoroughly mystified him. There were many things to be done in the great city and Earl, who had received a letter from his brother urging him to join him in France, was aware that the time of his stay in England would soon be ended.

One day he spent at Eton, going through the great buildings of the famous school. As it was

holiday time he did not see any of the boys dressed in their garb, which was strange to him,—high hats and Eton jackets. He laughed as he tried to picture an American boy of twelve dressed after that fashion.

Another day he spent at the famous Harrow School. When his guide was telling him about the punishment which the boys received, he laughed at the suggestion that the younger boys received their whippings at the hands of the older ones. To be beaten with a rod was a "caning." While a "birching" was a beating with a bundle of birch twigs.

"It is not often," explained his guide, "that the boys receive this punishment. The shame of it is much more than the physical effect."

"What are they beaten for?" inquired Earl.

"The four great offenses," explained the guide, "are telling a lie, smoking, drinking, and being absent from the school grounds without permission."

Earl also was deeply interested in the stories which his guide told him of the "fags." Every one of the younger boys is a "fag" to some one of the monitors; that is to the older boys who have charge of the discipline and work of their forms. The fag of a monitor must do his errands, bring

his breakfast and look after the beds and the fires in his room. The monitor would step out of his room into the hall and in a loud voice call "Boy!" or "Fag!" Every fag runs quickly at the call and the last to arrive is "it."

He was told that "fagging" was different now from what it was in the earlier days when the boys were sent to the various shops to purchase food for their overlords.

He laughed when he said, "I should like to see that plan tried in American schools."

"Yes, I fancy," said the guide soberly; "it would be a great advantage."

Again Earl laughed as he said, "I did not mean really that I wanted to see the plan used there. All I meant was that I do not think it ever could be adopted."

"Why not, sir?"

"Because American boys are not used to taking their orders from other boys."

"Ah, yes," said the guide, "but think of what an advantage it would be to them."

"How is that?"

"Why, sir, the American boy is not very popular in England. He is not very considerate of the rights of others and in public places is very boisterous. He runs through the halls and cor-

ridors of the hotels and seems in no way to be mindful of the fact that he is disturbing other people. It would be a great thing for the American boy if he could be sent to some of our great public schools."

"I am afraid that is a matter of opinion," laughed Earl. "Do any of them come here? Have you had any American boys in attendance at Harrow?"

"Quite often. It would do your 'eart good to 'ear some of the Hamerican young gentlemen singing the 'Arrow Hanthem."

"What is that?" inquired Earl.

"Why, sir, hit's the 'Arrow song. It runs somewhat like this,—

"Forty years on, when afar and asunder,
Parted are those who are singing to-day,
When you look back and forgetfully wonder
What you were like in your work and your play;
Then it may be there will often come o'er you
Glimpses of notes like the catch of a song;
Visions of boyhood shall float there before you,
Echoes of dreamland shall bear them along.

And the chorus is,—

"Follow up! Follow up!
Till the field rings again and again
With the tramp of the twenty-two men!
Follow up! Follow up!"

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In spite of the cracked voice of his guide Earl nevertheless was moved by the stirring words of the famous old song.

The marvelous equipment of these great schools, the great buildings, the extensive playing grounds and the fact that every boy was expected to have a share in some of the athletic games, all appealed to him. His own school days now were completed and as we know he was expecting to enter college soon after he returned to America.

Neither Eton nor Harrow however had interested him as had the famous old school at Rugby. Perhaps the fact that this was the school which Tom Brown had attended was the explanation for his preference. His heart thrilled when he was taken to the very room in a dormitory which Tom Brown shared with seven other boys.

He thought of timid little Arthur when in his first night in the school he had knelt to say his prayers and had received the shower of boots from his friends for his devotion. Then he recalled how Tom Brown had taken the part of the little fellow and he almost believed that he understood something of the price it had cost the older boy. Indeed if truth must be told Earl insisted upon being taken to the spot beyond the "Three Trees" where Tom Brown had had his famous fight.

It was natural perhaps for him to be glad when he was told that in recent years twice as many Rugby boys had won scholarships when they had gone up to Oxford or Cambridge, as had the boys from any other school in England.

At last the time came when Earl was to depart from England. Already he had forwarded his baggage to Paris and was expecting to follow it the next day.

He was seated in his room in the hotel writing a letter to his mother when he was interrupted by a call on the telephone.

"Are you there? Mr. Alden wishes to speak to you."

In a moment Earl recognized the voice of the man who had crossed the ocean with him, as he said, "What are you expecting to do to-morrow?"

"I am planning to join my brother in France."

"How would you like to go with me in a yacht down the Thames to Dover? You can catch your train at Calais just the same and it will be a very beautiful ride."

"Thank you. Thank you," said Earl enthusiastically. "I should enjoy it very much. You are very kind to invite me."

The ride was one which Earl never forgot. All the way from London to Gravesend the Thames

presented a busy stirring scene. Great vessels were coming and going, huge docks and warehouses lined the shores, parks and gardens frequently were to be seen,—all parts of the constantly changing picture. At Gravesend, pilots boarded the incoming vessels to guide them up the narrow channel to London. Even from the deck of the yacht Earl could see the narrow and crowded little streets in the lower part of the busy town.

"One of your fellow-countrymen, or rather countrywomen, was buried here," explained Mr. Alden.

"Who?"

"Pocahontas."

"Do you mean that?"

"Surely. The Indian maid died when she was young and her grave is here. Gad's Hill where Dickens used to live and where he died is only two miles away."

Soon the yacht passed on into the broader waters. "How narrow the channel is," said Earl.

"What makes you think that?"

"Why, the stakes and the buoys are planted so closely together."

"It is true the channel is quite narrow," said

Mr. Alden, "and the English think that is a great advantage."

"How?"

"Why in time of war it would be impossible for any battleship to make its way up the Thames unless it had a pilot who was familiar with every foot of the course. If we had time it would be interesting for you to stop at Margate or Ramsgate."

"What are they?"

"They are the English Atlantic City or Coney Island, although neither of them is as large as either of your American resorts. Did you ever read any of the novels of Charles Dickens?"

"I have read Bleak House."

"It may interest you then to know that Broadstairs over yonder is the place where Dickens wrote that story. We are not very far now from the sands where the vessels of the Merchant of Venice were lost. Perhaps you will enjoy reading the play more now that you have seen the very place where the ships were wrecked."

Throughout the voyage Philip Alden had frequently urged his young friend to take photographs of the places which interested him. Why he should be so urgent Earl did not understand,

but before the mouth of the Thames had been reached he had two films filled.

When at last the boat approached Dover, Earl was thinking of the great armies which here had crossed the English Channel in the many wars between England and France. As he looked up at the walls of the immense castle and saw the fortifications which were to protect the harbor he little realized that the most exciting incident in his life was to occur here.

CHAPTER XII

THE ARREST

"AS this will be my last opportunity to do anything for you," said Philip Alden when he and his companion landed from the boat, "I wish you would stay over until to-morrow. You are in no great haste, are you?"

"Not necessarily," said Earl. "What is it you want to do?"

"I have a letter which will permit us to come up to the fort. Of course we shan't be admitted inside the real defenses, but you can see something of what England has done to protect herself from her enemies."

"Thank you," said Earl cordially. "How long will that take?"

"Just as long as you want," laughed Mr. Alden. "You can stay an hour or two hours or all day. The boats leave for Calais every hour, so you will not be losing very much time if you stay over."

The invitation was accepted and early the fol-

lowing morning Earl and Mr. Alden departed from their hotel to make their way to the fort which overlooked the narrow waters of the Channel.

The morning was so clear that the outlines of Calais could be seen in the distance. The myriads of boats were skimming back and forth. The frowning heights above the city of Dover were glimmering in the sunlight. The day was one to make the heart of Earl rejoice. The thought of soon joining his brother and the trip which they had planned to take on mortorcycles through France had their special appeal.

Meanwhile Philip Alden was leading the way toward the heights they were to visit.

"What makes the English soldiers," inquired Earl, "wear that dinky little tin cup on their heads?"

"That's their regulation cap."

"It must be a great protection," laughed Earl.

"It seems strange to you," said Mr. Alden, "because you are not accustomed to it."

"That may be so," admitted Earl laughingly, "but I could about as soon think of my grandfather being dressed up in the cap of my sister's baby."

"Never mind, the English soldiers can fight."

"Not as well as the Germans, you said the other day."

"When did I say that?" inquired Philip Alden sharply.

"I don't just know. I think you said it, though."

"I did not say it."

"After all some people say that the next war will be decided by the fight in the air or under the water. They are all planning for that, anyway."

"Are they?" inquired Philip Alden quietly. "Do you know how many dirigibles Germany has?"

"No."

"Well, she has thirty."

"How many has Great Britain?"

"Seven."

Earl felt that the eyes of his companion took on a new expression as he referred to the contrast between the equipment of the two nations.

"How about the aëroplanes?"

"Germany has one thousand and Great Britain has four hundred."

"Whew!" laughed Earl. "Germany is a good deal stronger in gas and hot air, isn't she?"

"When the time comes you will see the way she will use what you call her 'gas and hot air.'"

"Are you a German?" said Earl abruptly.

"Is that what you now think I am?" responded Philip Alden.

"I cannot quite make you out."

"By the way," said Philip Alden, as if he suddenly recalled a matter he had forgotten. "I want you to take this package for me. Take it with you back to London. I ought to have left it before I departed, but neglected to do so. You will kindly mail it for me after your return?"

"But I am not going back to London," said Earl quickly. "I am going on to Paris."

"Did I say London? I meant Paris of course. Mail it when you arrive in Paris."

Somewhat reluctantly Earl took the little flat package, not unlike the one which his companion had given him just before their arrival at Liverpool.

"How many films have you?" inquired Philip Alden.

"Two rolls."

"That ought to be sufficient. I am glad you are following my advice and taking so many pictures. Those you take of the old forts here will be especially interesting to you after you get back home. My advice is to take a good many today."

Earl did not reply, although he looked keenly at his companion.

Philip Alden's face, however, was expressionless and he did not say anything more until after they had been admitted to the outer works of the fortifications, to which their pass admitted them.

"Let me advise you," said Philip Alden, "when you take your photographs not to be too open about it. Of course they will know you will never make use of any pictures you take, but at the same time they do not like to have people carry away photographs of their defenses."

"Perhaps, then, I had better not try to take any."

"Yes, yes," said Philip Alden quickly. "There is no harm about that. Now you take that angle right ahead of you. You have a good perspective there and can take the waters of the Channel and the ships as well as the works."

Earl instantly followed the suggestion and as they walked about the grounds he filled a roll of films.

"Let me take that roll," said Philip Alden; "I will have them developed for you. I have a friend who makes a specialty of that work and I will see to it that you receive such pictures as you never had."

"That's all right," laughed Earl, as he took out the roll and handed it to his companion.

In the course of their walk he contrived to take several other pictures, although he did not use all his remaining films.

"You wait here for me," said Philip Alden. "I shall be back in a few minutes. I want to see one of my friends who is stationed here."

Earl seated himself on a bench to await the return of Philip Alden.

It was still early in the morning and the sun was shining brightly. The distant outlines of Calais seemed to be much nearer than they really were. Earl was trying to picture to himself the crossings which had been made centuries before. Almost he could see the soldiers with their lances and spears, their helmets and shields. How different warfare was in the days of William the Conqueror from what it is to-day, he thought. The arrows of that time would have slight effect against the heavy artillery of the present.

Earl stopped to look at the guns which could be seen in the fortifications and was well aware that the cannon upon which England most depended for her defenses were not within his vision.

A half-hour passed and still Philip Alden did not return. An hour elapsed and Earl's uneasi-

ness increased. At last he decided that he would no longer wait for his recent companion, but would at once make his way to the dock where the boat for Calais was waiting.

"He will understand why I have gone on," thought Earl. "He knew I was going to sail some time this morning."

Leisurely Earl departed from the fort and proceeded down the street that led to the dock below. He still had ample time before the sailing of his boat and he was deeply interested in the sights of the quaint old town. Somehow he expected to see Philip Alden before the boat left her slip. He glanced behind him several times to see if the man was coming. He must have been delayed by some important matter at the fort, he concluded, and at last convinced that he would not see him again before he set sail, Earl gave no more thought to the perplexing man and turning about walked rapidly toward the dock.

He was deeply impressed by the solid masonwork that appeared all along the shore. Massive, strong, lasting all the work seemed to be. No decaying piles nor swaying timbers were to be seen. All the work had been well done and built with a view of the years that were to come as well as of the present.

The train from London had just arrived and Earl looked with interest at the crowd which leisurely made its way toward the boat. Again he looked about him to see if Philip Alden was anywhere within sight, but the man was nowhere to be seen.

Earl was about to join the line, hoping to secure a seat on the upper deck on the swift little steamer, when he felt a hand laid lightly upon his shoulder. The startled boy looked behind him to see who had accosted him, still half suspecting that Philip Alden had come back.

"I beg pardon," said the man in a low voice, "but you are wanted at the fort."

"What for?" inquired Earl blankly.

"That, sir, I cannot explain. Doubtless you will be informed by the proper authorities."

"But I am going to Calais," protested Earl. "I have my ticket. I am just going to join my brother in France."

"It is a pity," said the man quietly, "but you will have to postpone your departure."

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I said, sir. You must come with me to the fort."

"But I do not understand," protested Earl.

"I do not know anyone at the fort. I was there this morning with a friend who had a permit."

"Quite so."

"I do not want to go back again. I haven't time. Tell me what it is you want."

"I have said to you that I cannot explain now. Perhaps the commandant may do so."

"But I do not know him."

"Quite likely you will meet him."

"I do not think I shall go." Looking directly into the eyes of the man before him Earl saw that he was determined and that there was more in his quietly spoken words than at first had appeared. He was a stranger, there was no question as to that. Dressed in the ordinary garb of an Englishman and although he was erect in his bearing there was nothing to imply that he was a soldier.

"My dear sir," said the man quietly in a low voice, "it will be better for you if you come with me without making any disturbance."

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I say."

"But you tell me that I *must* go back to the fort?"

"Indeed, I do."

"Am I arrested?"

"You are, sir."

Startled as well as angry Earl's first thought was to ignore the man and join the line of people which was steadily making its way on board the steamer. In a moment, however, he was aware how foolish such action on his part would be and he quickly gave up the thought. He was confident that there must be some mistake. Quite likely he had been taken for someone else. The matter could be speedily adjusted, he thought, and turning to the man he said, "All right, sir, I will go with you."

"Very well, sir," responded the stranger as quietly he withdrew from the line and the two at once left the station and started on their way up to the grim old fort.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SEARCH

IN spite of the confusion in Earl's mind he was so convinced that it was all a mistake which could be rectified soon, he made no protest as he walked beside the man who had arrested him. He still was watching for Philip Alden to appear, but he did not see him, even after they turned to the fort.

Silently up the hill the two men walked. What would his family think when they should hear that he had been arrested? The question caused Earl to turn to the man beside him and he was about to protest again against the action, but fortunately in time he recalled how useless all such attempts would be. There was nothing now for him to do except to comply with the demand. In a brief time the matter would be cleared up and he would be free to return to the dock.

Not a word was spoken as Earl was conducted within the fort and taken to a room from which there was a beautiful view of the glimmering Channel.

When he entered he saw seated at a desk a man dressed in the uniform of an English colonel.

The man beside Earl saluted as he entered and as he stepped to one side the boy was aware that he had been arrested by a soldier.

The officer continued to write a few moments after his first quick glance at his visitor.

At last the officer said slowly as he swung about in his chair and looked directly at Earl, "You are Philip Alden."

Earl laughed as he replied, "No, sir, I am not."

"But you are," said the officer positively as he brought his fist down upon the desk before him.

The mistake was so ludicrous that Earl was again tempted to laugh, but wisely controlled himself. He did not, however, respond to the positive assertion that he was someone else.

"If you are not Philip Alden, who are you?"

"Earl Platt."

"Where is your home?"

"In the United States."

A slight smile appeared upon the face of the questioner as he said, "I understand that you usually are someone else or somewhere else."

"No, sir," said Earl, undismayed, "I am not ashamed of my name, and I can tell you just where I have been every day since I landed in England."

"We are sure of you this time. You have given us the slip once or twice before. Now I fancy you will have your troubles."

"Do you still think I am Philip Alden?" demanded Earl in astonishment.

"I know you are. We shall soon let you prove that you are not," suggested the officer as turning to the man who now Earl thought to be his captor, he said, "Take him in and search him."

As soon as he had spoken the officer turned about in his chair and resumed his task at the open desk.

For the first time Earl was alarmed. Up to this moment he had looked upon the affair as ludicrous. It was simply a case of mistaken identity, although he could not understand why the name of Philip Alden had been brought in.

"There is no use in this," he said angrily to his conductor as they entered the corridor. "I give you my word that I am Earl Platt. I am from the United States. My brother is now in France and is waiting for me to come."

No reply was given his protest, however, and in a brief time Earl was taken to a room in which two other soldiers were found, for the boy now was convinced that his attendant was also a soldier. He was angry as well as alarmed, but the wild

thoughts of trying to escape, which for a moment came to him, were speedily abandoned. It had been his father's wish for him to learn to rely upon himself, he thought. In spite of his annoyance, for as yet Earl did not believe himself to be in any danger, he smiled as he said to himself, "Even my father ought to be satisfied now. Here I am three thousand miles from home, arrested and taken to an English fort. I wonder if they think I am the German Kaiser or Willie Buffalo from the Wild West."

His thoughts, however, were interrupted as the sergeant said sharply, "Take off your coat, sir."

As soon as the garment was removed a search of its pockets was made by one of the soldiers.

"What is this, sir?" inquired the sergeant as a page of thin paper was taken from his pocket and held up before him.

For a moment it was impossible for Earl to recognize what he saw. Suddenly he recalled the paper which had been left by Philip Alden and the man with whom he had been having an interview in his room in the hotel at Chester. He had forgotten to return the paper.

"What is it, sir?" repeated the officer sternly.

"I do not know, sir," hesitated Earl. "It was a paper left in my room in my hotel."

"Where was that?"

"At Chester."

"Who left it?"

"Philip Alden and the man who was with him. I intended to give it back, but put it in my coat pocket and forgot all about it."

"Then it was Philip Alden who left it, was it?" inquired the officer smiling slightly as he spoke.

"Yes, sir."

"It seems to me that you are always someone else or somewhere else. It is most extraordinary. I fancy, however, that we are sure of you this time."

"But I am not Philip Alden," protested Earl loudly.

"Go on with the search," said the sergeant, ignoring the protest of the boy.

"And what is this?" he inquired as the soldier handed him a flat thin package which he had taken from the inner pocket of the coat. "Is this a package which Philip Alden left in your room, too?"

"He gave it to me," said Earl in a low voice.

The sergeant smiled incredulously as he at once unfolded the little package.

"Pray when did Mr. Philip Alden give you this?"

"This morning just before we came up to the fort."

"And did you—?"

"He did."

"And you feel sure that—"

"I told you my name is Earl Platt and I am from the United States. I had a letter of introduction to Philip Alden and came with him yesterday on a boat down the Thames."

"What boat was it?"

"The *Golden Hind.*"

"Perhaps Sir Francis Drake came too?" said the sergeant sarcastically.

"No, sir, I came because Mr. Philip Alden invited me. It is the first time I have ever been in England and I thought the ride down the Thames would be one I would remember."

"And you were not mistaken. I am sure you will remember it as long as you live."

The package now had been opened and the sergeant was looking keenly at the contents. As far as Earl was able to see he thought the package had been made up of papers not unlike the one he had found in his room, on which the outlines of earthworks had been faintly traced. The face of the sergeant became more stern as he turned to the soldier and said, "Go on with your search."

Nothing of importance, however, was revealed in the thorough search which was made. Earl was convinced that to oppose the action, no matter how strongly he might resent it, would but increase his difficulties. He was eager to have the examination ended and be free to sail for Calais.

"Now, then," continued the sergeant, "we will have a look at this camera of yours. What pictures have you been taking?" he continued as he drew out the roll of films.

"There is nothing in there," said Earl quickly, "except some pictures of the Channel and of the outside of the fortifications here."

"Quite so. It is very kind of you not to take any pictures of the interior of the fort."

"But I did not go inside."

"Quite so. It may be, however, that you will be permitted to enter soon."

"But I do not want to enter. I want to go on to Paris."

Not a word was spoken until the sergeant said brusquely, "Put on your coat. We will go back to the colonel."

When the little party again entered the room in which the colonel was seated at his desk the officer looked up and said sharply, "Well, Sergeant, what did you find?"

"That for one thing," he said as he placed on the desk before the colonel the paper which he had taken from Earl's pocket.

The officer did not speak, although after looking closely at the tracings he glanced keenly at Earl. Then turning again to the sergeant he said, "Anything more?"

"Yezzar." The sergeant then advanced and placed the package which Philip Alden had entrusted to Earl just before they had entered the fort.

"What are these?" demanded the colonel.

"You can see for yourself, sir," said the sergeant.

Earl was aware that the expression on the face of the commander became sterner as he rapidly glanced through the papers.

"Anything more, Sergeant?" he said as he swiftly turned to the guard.

"We took out his films from his camera. I do not yet know what they may show."

"Have them developed at once," ordered the colonel. "Meanwhile I shall be compelled to detain you," he said quietly to Earl.

"But why am I kept here?" demanded the startled boy.

"If you will think for a moment," said the col-

onel quietly, "I fancy you will understand. We have been warned to be on the lookout for a man named Philip Alden. You are reported to us as the one for whom we are looking. When we search you we find on your person drawings of our defenses. You have been in the north of England as well as in the south. You came in here with a pocket camera, which is strictly against our orders. I regret I am compelled to detain you until the films can be developed. Meanwhile I shall see to it that you are made as comfortable as possible."

CHAPTER XIV

A STARTLING STATEMENT

WHEN Earl was left in the little room to which he had been conducted he was aware that he was virtually a prisoner in the old fort. So dazed was he by the words of the commander that he did not yet fully realize the charge that had been made against him. Left to himself he was able to think more calmly about his condition. He had been charged with being a spy! The direct word had not been used, but all that it implied had been suggested in the actions as well as in the words of his captors.

And to be taken for Philip Alden! If the matter was not so serious Earl would have been inclined to laugh at the suggestion. Mr. Alden was a man nearly twice as old as he and there was not the faintest resemblance between the two.

The troubled boy became more serious, however, when he recalled the papers which had been left in his care by Philip Alden. He now began to suspect that perhaps the man had given him

the package with the very purpose that they should be found on his person if trouble arose.

Calmly Earl tried to think over the various times and places when he had been with Philip Alden and the different words he had spoken. The man's information was marvelous. But who was he? Why should he try to get him in trouble by leaving papers with him that plainly had aroused the anger of the commander of the fort? And, too, what had become of the man? Earl recalled his long wait for him and his failure to appear.

The chief problem, however, confronting the young American was to prove his identity and also to show that he was not guilty of any attempt to obtain information with any wrong motive.

If the commander would permit him he would show him how he had been making a collection of photographs which began even before the *Gallic* had sailed from New York.

Suddenly it occurred to the young prisoner that he had forwarded his trunk to Paris and all his pictures were in it. It would be impossible for him to confirm what he had said. Somewhat perplexed Earl then recalled the directions of his father that if he should fall into any great difficulty while he was in England he should at once consult

the American ambassador, who was a personal friend.

It was impossible to make any attempt, however, toward securing his release until he had had another interview with the commander.

The little room in which he was confined was not uncomfortable, but there were no means by which he could communicate with one outside. He was a prisoner without any sentence having been pronounced upon him.

The hours passed slowly and no one came to his room until his supper was brought in. Even then, when he tried to talk with the man who came, he received no replies to his questions.

At last in desperation he said to the waiter, "Tell the colonel I want very much to see him. I want to see him right away."

A half-hour later the sergeant who had previously conducted him to his room returned and without explaining the purpose of his coming bade Earl follow him. Together they returned to the room in which Earl had been searched. There the colonel apparently was awaiting his coming.

"Have you decided to tell who you are and why you had those drawings on your person?" demanded the officer sternly.

"I have told you already," stammered Earl.

"These letters were found also in the package," said the colonel, as he placed several thin sheets of closely written paper on the desk.

"I do not know what they are nor where they come from," said Earl eagerly.

"They are in German."

"I am afraid I do not know enough German to write a letter in it."

"Once more tell me your story," said the officer, not unkindly.

Thus bidden Earl recounted his experiences with Philip Alden from the time when first he had met him. He told of his own ride on a bicycle across England and then related the story of the flight of the pigeons on the coast of the North Sea near Lowestoft.

The colonel was listening intently, and, encouraged by his manifest interest, Earl continued, "Mr. Alden took me with him in his car to a place in the country about fifteen miles beyond the outskirts of London. There he had a dove-cote. He said he was very fond of pigeons and could not raise them in the city. He told me that all of them belonged to him."

"Did he bring any of the birds back with him into the city?" inquired the colonel.

"Yes, sir; he put several in a basket and we

took them with us in the car. After we had started, a big gray car came up behind us and Mr. Alden drove through the country faster than I ever rode before in my life. Once or twice we almost ran people down or had collisions. I thought the other car was chasing us, but he told me that it was not. Still now I think it was."

"What friends and acquaintances have you in London?" inquired the officer, after the brief silence.

"I haven't any. My brother and I came over this summer and my father told us that he was going to throw us entirely upon ourselves. He said if we should get into trouble it would do us good to get out of it. I find I am in trouble all right," said Earl dolefully, "and I don't see any way out unless you get the American ambassador to cable. My father is a great friend of his and I am sure he will do everything in his power."

"Do you know him yourself?" inquired the officer.

"No, sir."

"And he would not recognize you?"

"No, sir. I suppose it would take a long time to send a message and get an answer," suggested Earl.

"You ought to know," said the colonel, with a

smile, "that a cablegram can be sent from London to New York and be received in New York nearly five hours before it is sent."

"I do not understand," said the boy blankly.

"You know how much ahead of New York time our time in London is, don't you?"

"Yes, sir. About five hours."

"So if I send a message at six o'clock at night it will be received in New York about one o'clock the same afternoon. I am sorry," he continued, "but I shall be compelled to ask you to remain here until to-morrow. Meanwhile the films will be developed—"

"But Mr. Alden," broke in the boy impulsively, "urged me to take the pictures and he took one of the rolls himself. I do not know where he went nor what became of him. I waited an hour for him but when he did not come I decided to go on and take the boat for Calais."

"Is there any special reason why you want to join your brother immediately?" asked the colonel not unkindly.

"No, sir, there is no special reason except that I have written him that I am coming."

"Whatever may be the outcome of my detaining you here, my advice to you is not to try to make your way into France just now."

"Why not, sir?" inquired Earl quickly.

"It is plain that you haven't been reading the papers of late. I do not think I need to detain you any longer."

Earl was aware that he was to be taken back to his room and that the interview was at an end.

He still virtually was a prisoner, but his heart was somewhat lighter from the intimation that he had received that the colonel would request the American ambassador to secure further information from home.

As soon as word had been received doubtless he would be released from his confinement in the fort and be free to continue on his way to join his brother in Paris.

Convinced that he had found the solution of his troubles Earl was soon in bed and sleeping soundly.

His disappointment was keen when the following day passed and no word from America was received. The colonel apparently gave him no thought or attention and Earl became somewhat anxious as the hours passed.

His anxiety, however, soon gave place to excitement when the sergeant came to his room with his supper and as he placed the tray on a little stand said to him, "Have you heard the news?"

"How should I hear any news?" retorted Earl. "Has the colonel had a cablegram from New York?"

"Not as I 'ave 'eard. But it is bigger news than that."

"What is it?"

"There's war."

"War! Who is fighting?"

"Germany, sir. She has declared war on Russia and is mobilizing her troops for to move upon France."

"What!" exclaimed Earl, instantly excited by the alarming statement.

"Yezzar."

"You really know what you are saying to be true, do you?"

"Yezzar. You see Austria was not satisfied with the answer Servia made to her demand, so she declared war on Servia. Then Russia says as 'ow she will stand by Servia. Germany says if Russia moves she will fight her. Of course the minute Germany moves France is ready to start and there you 'ave it."

"What about England?"

"I cannot say," said the sergeant guardedly.

After the departure of his visitor Earl for a long time sat in silence thinking over his own

predicament. If what he had been told was true and France was in a state of war it would be impossible for him to enter that country. Perhaps his own difficulties might be increased by the trouble that would arise.

Alarmed by the problem confronting him Earl finally found a ray of hope when he decided that Leon without doubt would immediately start for England as soon as he heard that France was at war with Germany.

CHAPTER XV

A VOICE IN THE CROWD

THE feeling in the heart of Earl when he was left to himself was difficult for him to understand. His excitement over the startling announcement he had heard was keen and yet in a way he felt almost as if it were impossible to credit it. Could it be true? What was the meaning of it all? Not a sign of trouble had been seen by him in his long ride across the country and yet this announcement which the sergeant had made to him could not be of something unseen or unknown by the leaders of the British nation.

His thoughts turned to his brother. If Germany was in a death grapple with Russia it meant without doubt that France also was in the struggle. What hope could the German nation have of success against such odds? If England should join in the fray then doubtless she would side with France as they both were members of the Triple Entente.

Earl was seriously troubled about the safety

of his brother. The last letter he had received had suggested that they should meet at Brussels. Leon stated that his plan was to secure a motorcycle and go through the country from Paris to the capital of Belgium. He urged Earl to cross to Dover or Ostend by boat and then come by train to Brussels. After their meeting they could plan for their future movements.

The following day Earl was set free. After he had been summoned by the commander the latter said to him, "Let this be a lesson to you."

"Yes, sir," said Earl humbly.

"Fortunately I have been able to verify your statements and have received a cable from America. Your ambassador has interested himself very much in this matter and requests me to tell you to come at once to him."

"But I am planning to go to France," protested Earl.

"You cannot go," said the officer quietly.

"But I must," protested Earl, his anxiety apparent in the trembling of his voice as he spoke. "My brother is there."

"That is unfortunate, but it cannot be helped."

"Why can I not go?"

"France is on the verge of war."

"With Germany?"

"Yes. You must do as I say and abandon all thought of going to France at least for the present."

"What shall I do?" demanded Earl.

"That I cannot tell you except that it seems wiser for you to go back to London and consult the American ambassador, as I have suggested. He may be able to do something for you, or get you word from your father."

Earl said no more and at once departed from the place. He had not been treated harshly although the experience had been entirely new to him. Something of the great power behind all the soldiers and fortifications was apparent now and this power was in the men who controlled not only the troops but in a way the destinies of the great country.

Just before he departed Earl saw the sergeant who had been in charge of him. "I am free," said the boy eagerly.

"Yezzar."

"But I cannot go to France."

"Yezzar."

"The American ambassador has helped me out."

"Yezzar," replied the sergeant.

"Do you know what became of Philip Alden?"

"I cannot say, sir."

"Do you know whether he was captured or not?"

"I cannot say, sir."

"He and I were here, as I told you," explained Earl, "and all at once he disappeared. I waited an hour or more for him to come back but as he did not show up I started to go on without him. I wish I knew what had become of him." Earl's face flushed as he spoke for his feeling of anger against Philip Alden had now become intense.

He was convinced that the man was a spy and that he had made use of him as one upon whom he tried not only to cast suspicion but even more. It was not without his foresight, Earl thought, that he had the roll of films, the package of papers and the drawings in his pockets. Practically they had been thrust upon him by Philip Alden himself.

As he looked back Earl was convinced also that when the landing had been made at Liverpool even then Philip Alden had requested him to hold the little package for him and mail the letter because he feared to have them on his own person. Doubtless he had no scruples about endangering even the life of the young American who had brought him the letter of introduction. In times

like these to be suspected of being a spy was a most serious matter.

However, even the sergeant did not know what had become of Philip Alden. It was plain also that he did not intend to impart any of his information to the eager young traveler.

Delaying no longer he at once turned to the station and secured a seat in the train, which in a few minutes was to depart for London.

The compartment in which he found a seat was crowded with people. He was compelled to stand throughout most of his journey. A feeling of strong excitement was manifest in all his fellow travelers though for a time all were silent.

At last, however, two or three Englishmen no longer able to resist their anger, launched forth in a tirade against the Kaiser, whom they charged with being the prime disturber of the peace of Europe. With difficulty these men had escaped from a village on the Rhine and had succeeded in making their way through France just before the final stand had been taken. All three of the men were standing in the compartment as Earl also was compelled to do.

When Earl arrived in the great city he at once discovered that the excitement there was intense. There was no noisy manifestation but there were

crowds of people assembled in Charing Cross Station and when he tried to secure a porter to carry his bag he soon found that not one was to be found. In reply to his question as to what had become of the attendants no explanation was given save a stare which betrayed the surprise that anyone should ask such a futile question.

When he passed out into the street he found it was thronged with people. At last with difficulty he made his way to his hotel where he was informed that it would be impossible for him to secure the same room he had formerly occupied. Refugees were pouring into London from every direction.

Gladly Earl accepted a room in the extreme top of the great building. He was glad to find a resting place almost anywhere that would be reasonably safe. In a brief time the boy again went out upon the street and proceeded toward Trafalgar Square. Before he drew near he could hear the shouts of the vast assembly there and in a moment he saw that a surging mass of humanity had filled the place. Even the huge bronze lions near the base of the towering monument to Nelson were hidden from sight by the swaying, excited people.

In various places men thoroughly aroused were striving to make their voices heard as they at-

tempted to address the crowd. Frequently someone would lead in a cheer and then begin to sing "God Save the King." The vast assembly joined not only in the hurra'ns, but in the stirring words of the national hymn.

It was now dusk but the people showed no desire to depart from the place. As Earl moved about among the crowds he was mightily stirred by the bits of conversation he overheard.

"I tell 'e," one man was saying to a group of three, "the Garmans will be droppin' bombs right 'ere on Trafalgar Square before a week 'ave passed."

"Yezzar," responded another excited man, "there isn't nothink wot those Garmans won't do."

Similar snatches of excited conversation were to be heard on every side. And yet in spite of the feeling the crowd was quiet and orderly.

Earl's dismay increased when within a day or two not only were France and Germany at war, but also England. After Sir Edward Grey and others had done their utmost to maintain peace, the country was so outraged by the action of Germany in breaking her pledge to preserve the neutrality of the little country of Belgium that Great Britain too joined in the strife.

Already the immense German war machine was advancing. The protests of little Belgium were unheeded. In her anxiety to strike hard and strike quickly at her enemy, Germany's troops were already moving across the Belgian territory. Unmindful of her solemn promise she declared that the treaty was only "a scrap of paper," and the huge army advanced into the peaceful land.

The indignation at this action became intense in England. Thousands of men were volunteering. Great bodies of troops were marching through the streets of London and there was an air of determination that was manifest on the faces not only of the soldiers, but on the quiet faces of men of business.

And yet the excitement, already high, became still more intense. To Earl's consternation it was impossible for him to obtain any money. Even the notes of the Bank of England were refused and he had only a few coppers in his pocket.

However, the people in the hotel were exceedingly kind and permitted him to "sign" for his meals and lodgings.

The following afternoon near sunset Earl once more joined the great throng that had assembled at Trafalgar Square. He was listening to the

words of an impassioned speaker who was appealing to the assembly not merely to show their loyalty but to encourage all available men to enlist, for the English soldiers are volunteers and not conscripts as is the custom with Germany and France.

Abruptly Earl turned and looked behind him as he heard a voice which reminded him of someone he could not for the moment tell who. Again the voice was heard although the tones were low and as Earl looked keenly to his right he saw two people whom instantly he recognized. One was the girl who had been helping fly the pigeons from the coast near Lowestoft, and the man to whom she was speaking was the one with whom Philip Alden had had his interview in the old hotel at Chester.

CHAPTER XVI

IN THE OLD BUILDING

IT had required a second glance to convince Earl that the man was really the one whom he had now recognized. He was positive, however, that he was not mistaken and of the girl he was sure from his first glance at her. It was the voice of the man, however, that had aroused his attention and caused him to recall who he was.

His first feeling was one of amazement. What were these two doing in London? Why were they together in the assembly? It was more than likely, he thought, that they could inform him what had become of Philip Alden.

Unmindful for the moment of the crush about him Earl decided to watch the movements of the pair, who even as he tried to step nearer, were endeavoring to withdraw.

Persuaded that they were now leaving, the boy was eager to follow. In the approaching struggle his own sympathies were so strong for his English and French relatives that he had quickly decided to report to the proper authorities what

he had learned concerning Philip Alden. It was possible that the man already was in custody. But the fact that the girl who had been the pigeon-flyer had now come to London and that she was seen in company with a man with whom Philip Alden had been having a secret interview was a cause of great suspicion. He would report what he knew but his words would be greatly strengthened if he should follow the retiring pair and see where they went.

It was exceedingly difficult for Earl to keep near the two whom he was trying to follow. Several times he lost sight of them in the great assembly but every time he succeeded in obtaining another view of them.

Apparently neither was in any fear of discovery or arrest. They seldom spoke to each other but were walking side by side except when the man was compelled by the pressure of the crowd to precede his companion and make an opening for her to enter in the throng.

Earl's pursuit first led him along the Strand. As he proceeded the crowd became less dense and his difficulty in keeping the two within sight was not so great.

On and still on the man and the girl walked along the street and Earl still followed, striving

all the time to keep far enough behind to escape observation by either of them.

On into Fleet Street the two people continued and his excitement caused him even to forget the long walk they had compelled him to take. Indeed his excitement now became more keen. Would they go to Philip Alden's place, or office, in the top of the old building where he had first found him after he had come to London?

While the thought was in his mind, once more Earl lost sight of the pair as an unexpected crowd surged into the street from a large hall in which an impassioned orator had been addressing an excited audience of his countrymen.

When at last Earl succeeded in making his way through the crowd on the streets he looked about him, but neither of the people he was following could he see. He retraced his way but still was unable to find either of them.

Perplexed, he stepped within a doorway and waited a few minutes while the crowd surged past him. He carefully scanned the face of every passerby and neither the girl nor the man for whom he was looking was seen in the surging mass of humanity.

When several minutes had elapsed and Earl's efforts to discover the people were unrewarded

he abruptly decided to continue on his way down Fleet Street and go to the room which Philip Alden had occupied as an office. Perhaps there he would find the people whom he had been following.

So excited was Earl by the thought that all perils that might threaten him or dangers into which he might enter for a moment were ignored or forgotten. The one sublime purpose in his mind now was to overtake and locate the two fellow-conspirators of Philip Alden, for so the boy was convinced both should be termed.

Without doubt the trio had acted together and it might be possible that many others were in the same plot. Just what they were trying to do Earl was not positive, but that all three were characters dangerous to the welfare of Great Britain he was fully assured in his mind.

As soon as the eager lad had decided as to the best course for him to follow he at once proceeded on his way. He was striving now to move rapidly and as he went on, the diminishing throng enabled him to walk faster than he had been able to do in the more crowded parts of the thoroughfare.

Without making any special attempt now to discover the people whom he desired to see he

nevertheless watched the faces of those whom he met, but without finding either the man or the girl.

Steadily Earl proceeded on his way until at last he arrived at the entrance to the old building in which Philip Alden had made his headquarters.

It was now dark and for the first time Earl became aware of the peril that might confront him if he should be taken at a disadvantage. He must make his way alone up the dark staircase. Would it not be better for him at once to report to the police and secure necessary help in his attempt?

The fear, however, that the girl or the man, if either had entered the building, might now depart without his seeing them caused him to decide not to wait for any help, at least for a time.

He entered the dark hallway and stopped and listened. Not a sound came to him from the floor above. Outside the building, the dim indescribable roar of the great city was heard but that was all. He had found the outer door unlocked and after he had entered and closed it safely behind him, for a moment he was unable to discern even the walls in the darkness. Gradually, however, his eyes became more accustomed to the darkness and he saw the faint outlines of the rail as he peered above him through the small open court.

For several minutes Earl remained standing in the lower hall listening intently for sounds that might indicate the presence of anyone within the building.

No sound, however, was heard and Earl then determined to climb the stairs cautiously and make what further discoveries were in his power on the floor above.

Slowly and carefully Earl made his way to the floor above. There once more he halted and listened.

The silence within the building was still unbroken and a faint light came in through the window in the front of the hall but no objects were distinctly seen. Again the determined boy made the ascent of the next stairway and when he gained the floor above, once more he stopped to listen for sounds that might reveal the presence of anyone in the old building.

Once more there were no sounds to indicate that anyone besides himself was there. In climbing the third stairway, the floor creaked so ominously that Earl stopped abruptly, fearful that the sounds would arouse anyone who might be nearby. He was breathing heavily and could feel his heart beating wildly in his excitement. Once more the foolishness of his attempt dimly ap-

pealed to him but Earl Platt was a boy who having once started in a course of action did not abandon his efforts until he was compelled to do so.

Again resuming his climb he gained the floor above where once more he repeated his plan. Still there were no suspicious sounds to break the silence. The building plainly was deserted save for the presence of Earl.

Only one floor now remained and with increased anxiety Earl slowly climbed the creaking stairway.

Several times in his course he stopped and listened for signs or sounds of danger. Nothing, however, occurred to interrupt his progress and in a few moments he found himself on the uppermost floor.

His excitement now became still keener though there were no thoughts of turning back. Stealthily he made his way along the dark hall and it was with difficulty at last that he prevented an exclamation escaping from his lips when he saw coming from beneath the warped door of Philip Alden's office a faint light.

He was convinced now that someone was there. Perhaps Philip Alden himself had returned. It might be, he thought, that all three of the sus-

picious characters were assembled here. He glanced toward the window opening upon the street to make sure that his voice would be heard if he should cry for help. It was doubtful, he decided at once, whether any such attempt on his part would avail, for the dull roar of the passing crowd arose above all other sounds on the air of the summer night.

Resolutely Earl then advanced toward the door that opened into the office of Philip Alden.

CHAPTER XVII

THE REFUSAL

WHEN he arrived at the door Earl stopped and listened. The beatings of his own heart sounded in his ears even louder than the roar of the great city. Several times he was convinced that he heard footsteps within the room. There was no question in his mind that the girl had entered and now was in Philip Alden's office.

Startled by what he thought was the sound of footsteps Earl hastily ran to the end of the hall. There he waited in the darkness, but the sound was not repeated and in a few minutes he turned once more to the door. Again he listened but the silence in the old building was unbroken. At last, although his hand was trembling as he did so, he rapped two or three times noisily on the panel.

No response was given his hail although he waited until he thought at least two minutes must have elapsed.

Again he repeated his summons, this time strik-

ing the panel of the door more noisily. But if his summons was heard within there was still no response. At last after he had noisily rapped several times, in a voice which he thought could be heard on the opposite side of the door, Earl said, "Open up!" This time he was positive there was a movement within the room and he heard the sound of footsteps approaching.

"Who's there?" called someone in a voice which he was positive was that of the girl.

"Open the door and I will tell you."

"I shall not open the door until you tell me who you are."

"I will tell you who I am just as soon as you open the door."

"What do you want?"

"I will tell you that, too, just as soon as you open the door."

"Who are you?" again demanded the girl.

"A friend."

"Whose friend?"

"Philip Alden's."

There was a brief period of silence and Earl fancied he understood the hesitation of the girl.

"Did he send you?" she asked after a brief delay.

"Do not wait any longer," said Earl hastily.

"Open the door and I will tell you all about it."

"Very well, sir," said the girl. "I will open the door but I shall not permit you to enter."

Following her words the door was opened several inches but the rattling of a chain showed that it was held in its place. It was impossible for Earl to pass the threshold.

"Now tell your story and be quick about it," said the girl sharply.

"I want you to tell me where Philip Alden is."

"Who is Philip Alden?"

"Tell me where he is. You know him well."

"Has he sent you?"

"I cannot talk to you this way," said Earl impatiently.

"You will have to if you talk at all. State your message or I shall close the door and bar it."

Earl for a moment was at a loss what to say. He had followed the man and the girl in a sudden impulse to locate them and then report to the authorities what he had discovered. Now that he was talking with the girl herself he was in some confusion as he had no definite statement to make to her.

"Where is the man who was with you at Trafalgar Square?" he inquired after a brief silence.

"What man?"

"The one who was talking to you at Trafalgar Square. The one who came down the Strand with you. Where is he now?"

"What do you want of him?"

"Tell me where he is. I must see him."

"I fancy it will be some time before you will see him," said the girl and Earl imagined that there was a sound of relief in her voice as she spoke.

"Has he gone back to Germany?" inquired the boy.

"I do not know the man you are talking about. I do not know who you are. I shall not stay here to hear any more unless you tell me your name and why you have come to this place."

"This is Philip Alden's office," said Earl.

"Is it?" said the girl. It was manifest that she felt secure behind her defense and it was also plain that she was becoming impatient at the continuance of the conversation.

"I had a letter to Philip Alden," explained Earl.

"That has nothing to do with me. Tell me what you want and why you have come or I shall close the door, as I told you."

"What about the pigeons?" said Earl as a last

attempt to secure the attention of the occupant of the room in front of him.

In response the door was slammed to and the key hastily turned in the lock.

For a moment Earl was at a loss to know what next to do. Several times he rapped on the door but no response was given him.

A few moments longer he remained motionless, but there were no sounds to break in upon the stillness of the old building.

At last, convinced that he would be unable to enter, Earl turned away thinking that he would go to the authorities and report the strange case in which he had been forced to take part.

As he came to the end of the stairway he stopped a moment to look out into the street below him. Apparently the crowds were as large as when he had entered the building. The strange, indefinable roar of the city sounded loudly in his ears. The piercing voice of the newsboys occasionally broke in upon the monotonous sounds from the street. For a moment Earl thought of his father and his sage suggestion that if the boys fell into trouble they must learn how to climb out for themselves. Certainly he had need now of all his courage.

Not knowing just where to go and almost afraid

to depart from the building for fear of what might occur during his absence, he nevertheless decided to return to the street and make inquiries of the first policeman he chanced to meet.

At the head of the stairway of the third floor Earl stopped abruptly when it seemed to him that he heard the sound of the footsteps of someone coming up the stairway below him.

For a moment he was so thoroughly alarmed that he almost decided to run back up the stairs and demand protection in Philip Alden's office. A moment later, however, he recalled the face of the man who had been seen beside the girl in the crowd at Trafalgar Square. Doubtless he must be the one who was coming. The very manner in which he was climbing the stairs showed also that he did not wish to attract undue attention to himself. His footsteps were stealthy and so slow that Earl believed the man was stopping frequently to make sure that no one was following him.

There was no doubt, however, that the man was approaching. As he came nearer, Earl was trembling and yet more strongly determined not to run.

If the worst came the window over the street

might be gained and a cry would call the attention of the passers-by.

It was hopeless to attempt to pass the man on the stairway. Besides, he was not positive that the man who was coming was the same one whom he had seen at Trafalgar Square.

Suddenly Earl turned and ran to the opposite end of the hallway. There was a slight jog here and he decided as he recalled it that he would crowd himself against the wall, trusting to the darkness and the desire of the man to avoid attention to enable him to escape.

The approaching man soon came to the head of the stairway and turned toward the waiting boy. Scarcely daring to breathe Earl tremblingly awaited his coming. Against the dim light that entered through the window he could see outlines of the form of the man. It was impossible for Earl to decide but his conviction that it was the same one whom he had seen at Chester and in the early part of the evening in the great assembly became stronger. The man was big and burly and although he might not be very quick in his movements still Earl decided promptly, as he had when first he had met Philip Alden, that he had no desire to enter into a close personal contest with the stranger.

At last the man slowly passed the place where Earl was leaning against the wall and apparently without any suspicion that his actions were being watched. If he was a spy, thought Earl, he had no right to complain if he himself should be spied upon.

When the man silently made his way up the remaining stairway and turned into the hall a sudden impulse seized upon Earl and trusting to the dimness of the light and his own ability to move silently he quickly moved from his hiding-place and began cautiously to ascend the stairway.

When he arrived at the top he was just in time to see the door of Philip Alden's office open and the burly stranger disappear within.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE MAN IN THE HALL

THE door closed before Earl had fully recovered from his astonishment. Although he had suspected that the man who had just come might be the one for whom he was looking he nevertheless was scarcely prepared for the way in which the stranger had appeared and his ability to have the door opened for him without speaking.

Delaying only a moment Earl decided to make one more attempt to find out what was within the room before he returned to the street.

Creeping noiselessly along the narrow hallway he made his way in the darkness to the closed door.

He was convinced after listening a brief time that he heard the sound of voices within the room. He was puzzled, however, to understand why both voices sounded like those of men. Had he not left the girl alone in the room? He was positive that no one had come save the man for whom he had seen the door opened.

Quickly Earl decided that the bolder course was safer as well as wiser. Lifting his hand he rapped noisily three times upon the panel of the door.

Instantly the voices ceased. He remained standing for what he thought must be two minutes at least, but not a sound had he heard from within the room. Meanwhile the light which had been dimly revealed through the space between the door and the sill suddenly disappeared.

Convinced that his fears were not groundless Earl nevertheless rapped once more upon the door. The silence, within, however, was unbroken. He waited several minutes but still no response was made to his summons.

What could he do? The perplexed boy was aware that if the people whom he had followed were the ones whom he suspected them to be he was in no slight danger. He nevertheless hesitated to abandon his search and withdraw from the place without having learned more than he then knew.

The boy's excitement was intense and yet somehow he was not alarmed. He had decided upon the course of action he would follow in case the door had been opened for him. He would inquire for Philip Alden. Doubtless no explanation

would be given him, but at least such an attempt would enable him to perceive the inmates of the room and discover whether or not anything unusual was occurring there.

Again noisily Earl announced his presence. The rapping sounded almost weird in the darkness and silence of the hallway. Still no response was given to his summons and at last, hopeless of being able to secure an entrance, Earl withdrew, not at all certain what his next step ought to be.

Unwilling to acknowledge his defeat, Earl turned away from the door and resuming his place in the jog in the hallway waited in silence.

He was not without hope that his presence would not be discovered and that he at the same time might be able to discover what the next steps of the people whom he suspected would be.

The minutes passed slowly, but the silence was unbroken. Try as he might Earl was unable to hear any sound that indicated that the people in Philip Alden's room had resumed their conversation. The darkness for a time seemed to become more intense. The hoarse cry of the passing rabble in the street sounded dim and far away.

When a half-hour had elapsed Earl once more approached the door and listened intently. Ap-

parently the conversation had ceased, for he was unable to hear any sound from within. Was it possible that both had departed? It was impossible for them to leave the building through the hallway without discovery, Earl was fully convinced of that. It was also doubtful if any other means of escape were to be had. The only conclusion Earl could form was that the girl and the man must still be in the room, but that they had lowered their voices and if they conversed were doing so now in whispers.

Still uncertain what his course of action ought to be Earl slowly turned away from the door. The impulse was strong upon him to leave the house and go at once to people in authority and report what he had discovered. It was true that he was only a boy and a stranger to those to whom he might bring his report. It was more than probable that they would laugh at him for his fears and ignore his story. Indeed if it was known that he had been detained at Dover they might even deal severely with him. In the excitement of the times it was difficult when once a charge had been brought against a man that he was a spy, to disprove it even by the strongest of evidence.

However, no other course of action appeared to

be open to the boy, and moving slowly and cautiously to the head of the stairway he began his descent.

He had gone only partly down the top flight when he stopped abruptly. He was positive that someone was coming up the stairway below him. He waited only until he was convinced that his surmise was true and then hastily retracing his way again sought his refuge in the jog in the hallway.

His excitement now had returned in full force. Indeed Earl could feel the tremors which crept up and down his spine. He had no suspicion who the newcomer might be but the very fact that he was coming to such a place at such a time, was sufficient of itself to increase his alarm.

Slowly and silently and yet apparently without fear the man now was coming up the last of the steps. To Earl, who was hopeful that standing as he did in the darkness he would not be seen, the appearance of the man when he passed the light from the window in the end of the hallway startled the eager boy. The approaching man was Philip Alden. Of that Earl felt positive although he had obtained only an indistinct glimpse of him. Although he had not expected to find the man in London after his experiences in Dover it

nevertheless instantly occurred to the watching boy that this room was the place to which the mysterious man naturally would come. Earl waited until the man passed him and then suddenly and without thinking of what the effect of his words would be he decided to speak.

"Is that you, Mr. Alden?" he called in a loud whisper.

The abruptness with which the man stopped and looked quickly about him would have been ludicrous under other circumstances.

"Who is that?" demanded the man.

"I am Earl Platt. I have been waiting a long time for you to come."

"Are you alone?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long have you been here?"

"A half-hour or so."

"Has anyone else been here?"

At a loss to know how to reply, suddenly the expression which Philip Alden himself frequently had used occurred to Earl, "I cannot tell you that," he said.

"Have you seen anyone?"

"I think I did," replied Earl slowly.

"Come out in the light where I can see you," demanded Philip Alden.

Convinced that the bolder way was the safer one and that his best plan would be to act as if he had not been suspicious of the man before him, Earl stepped into the hallway where the dim light from the window fell upon him.

"Who has been here?" repeated Philip Alden.

"No one that I know."

Plainly his reply was misunderstood by the man before him, for Philip Alden quietly said, "If you have been here a half an hour and have not seen anyone then probably no one has been here."

"There is someone in your room, Mr. Alden," suggested Earl.

"Who is in there?"

It was evident the man was startled and Earl was quick to perceive the advantage which now was his.

"I think there is a girl in there. I rapped on your door and she opened it part way. She wouldn't let me in."

"And you have been waiting for me?" inquired Philip Alden.

"Yes, sir," stammered Earl, striving to persuade himself that what he was saying was not untrue.

"You wait here a moment until I turn on the light," said Philip Alden.

Fumbling a little while at the key hole the man at last succeeded in opening the door. As he did so Earl saw that the room was dark and apparently deserted.

When the light was turned on, Philip Alden said abruptly to Earl, "Come in."

When the excited boy responded and the door was closed behind him he was aware that Philip Alden, in spite of his quietly spoken words, was intensely excited. His hair was disheveled and his clothing awry and streaks of dust or mud were to be seen on his face. However, when he spoke, his voice was calm and his manner was collected. "Now tell me what you want," he said as, without inviting his guest to be seated, he turned and faced the young traveler.

CHAPTER XIX

FACE TO FACE

"THERE isn't anyone here," stammered Earl as he looked all about the room.

"Not unless you include me. Now, I am a busy man and I want you to tell me just what you want."

For a moment Earl was almost at a loss what to say. He had promptly decided that he would make no reference to the original purpose for which he had made his visit to the room. He decided also not to refer to the man and the girl. Suddenly it occurred to him that he might ask for an explanation of the mysterious disappearance of the man before him when together they had visited the fortifications at Dover.

"Where did you go," said Earl, "when you left me at the fort?"

"When *I* left you!" exclaimed Philip Alden. "You mean when you left me, don't you? I knew the boys from the States were a bit troublesome, but I think I never spent a more uncomfortable

half-hour in my life than I did when I was searching for you. Where were you?''

''Why,'' stammered Earl, almost convinced by the man's tones that he must be the one at fault, ''I waited there on the bench nearly an hour and a half for you. When you didn't come I finally went down to the dock. You know what happened to me then, don't you?''

''How should I know?'' said Philip Alden somewhat impatiently. ''I must frankly say to you that I am expecting to be very busy this evening and I have little time to lose. However, I shall be grateful if you will tell me at once what it is you want and why you came.''

''I wanted to tell you that I was arrested at Dover,'' said Earl somewhat angrily.

''What had you done there?''

''I had not done anything. They said they arrested me because they thought I was Philip Alden.''

The man laughed as if he was inclined to disbelieve the statement.

''It is true,'' continued Earl.

''And what did they want to arrest Philip Alden for?''

''They said he was a spy.''

"Did they?" inquired the man almost mockingly. "For whom was he spying?"

"The Kaiser."

"And had he already obtained a good deal of information which the English did not want him to have?"

"I do not know anything about that and I do not care," retorted Earl. "They kept me there thirty-six hours until they could have the American ambassador cable my father. They searched me and they found some of your papers on me."

"What were you doing with any of my papers?" demanded Philip Alden as he turned savagely upon the boy.

"I had the package which you gave me and the paper which you left when you and that man who met you in Chester and he was with—"

Earl stopped abruptly as he did not intend to explain to the man before him anything about the suspicions which he had formed concerning the man and the girl who had previously come to the room in which he and Philip Alden were now standing. Indeed the thought caused Earl to look about him as if he was searching for the man now.

A hasty glance, however, convinced him that there were no hiding places in the room and yet

he was equally sure that neither of them had withdrawn and passed him when he was waiting in the hall.

"Go on," said Philip Alden, "who was it he was with?"

"He was with you. Then the sergeant at Dover took out my films and had them developed and said that I was trying to take some pictures of the fortifications."

"And all the while they thought you were someone else?"

"Yes, sir, they said I was Philip Alden."

"But you convinced them that you were not?"

The man spoke almost banteringly, as if he were amused rather than alarmed by the statements which his young visitor had made. "And you came here to-night to tell me that, did you?"

"I wanted to tell you," said Earl in some confusion.

"Well, you have told me, and all I need say to you to-night is that it is all a mistake. I cannot explain to you, but you may take my word for it. I am sorry you had the trouble at Dover, but I fancy you have no one but yourself largely to blame."

In spite of his anger the words and manner of the man before him for a moment almost made

Earl feel that he himself must indeed be the guilty party.

He was about to ask for the roll of films which the man before him had taken when Philip Alden broke in before him and said, "I must not forget my obligations to your father's friend, Mr. Schwartz. Tell me what your plans are."

"I haven't made any plans yet. I cannot very well go to France and yet I cannot leave until I get word from Leon."

"Take my advice, young man," said Philip Alden, "and make arrangements to go home on the first boat that sails. If you have to go in the steerage don't hesitate to do it. Go now while you can, because a little later I am suspicious that it will be impossible for you to leave and you may be here when the trouble is worst."

"What do you mean?" demanded Earl, startled in spite of himself by the words of the man.

"I cannot make any plainer what I advise you to do. This trouble that was started by the assassination of the Grand Duke Francis Ferdinand has set Europe on fire. The greatest war which the human race has ever seen is here. Every great power in Europe is lined up. Austria wanted to punish Servia for the murder of

Duke Francis Ferdinand, then Russia began to mobilize her men and say that she would not permit Servia to suffer. As soon as Russia acted, France of course was ready to strike back at her old enemy. She has never forgiven Germany for winning so easily in 1870. Then England steps in—''

''I do not know just why England has declared war on Germany.''

''She hasn't really declared it. She simply says a state of war exists between the two nations. They are all trying to influence Italy, which according to her treaty if she is an honest nation ought to come at once to help Germany and Austria.''

''Why?''

''Because she agreed to in her treaty. That is the reason why Germany demands her aid now.''

''Because of her terms in the treaty?''

''Yes. No nation should ever go back on its own word.''

''What has Germany just done in Belgium, if to-night's papers are right?''

''What do you mean?''

''I mean about invading Belgium. The papers said that the reason why England had declared

war was because she had agreed a great many years ago with Germany to treat Belgium as a neutral country. And here Germany invades her as if she never had given her word at all."

"Germany justifies herself because she says she is fighting with her back against the wall. What is a piece of paper to a nation that is fighting for its fatherland, its homes and its very life?"

In spite of the quiet manner of Philip Alden there was an intensity in his words that almost thrilled his young hearer.

Whatever suspicions he may have cherished concerning the man there was no denying the fact that his love for Germany was intense. Nor did Earl question now as to what the nationality of Philip Alden was.

"You do not believe Germany can win, do you?" demanded Earl, his excitement for the moment causing him to forget even where he was and the peril which threatened him.

"Yes, sir, I do," declared Philip Alden. "Germany can beat the world. She has the greatest army ever organized and her people from the highest to the lowest are loyal to the Kaiser. He has done his best for thirty years to keep Europe in peace. The Czar of Russia and the English King have made it impossible."

"But look what she is facing."

"I do not care what she is facing. Germany has about 5,000,000 soldiers. Austria-Hungary has 1,500,000 more, while Italy has more than 1,000,000. Over against them France has 4,000,000, Russia has 6,000,000 and England has perhaps 600,000."

"You do not seem to be very much afraid of England."

"I do not belittle England. Her navy is her great protection. On land she has no army to compare for a moment with that of Germany."

"And yet," suggested Earl, "she sent 1,000,000 men down into Africa at the time of the Boer war."

"She'll need that many now and a good many more. I have taken too much time and I have talked very freely. I am a German, as you see and I love the fatherland, but let me tell you that if the English arrest me as a spy they will pay dearly for it."

The man's voice was tense and his anger as well as his confidence in his ability to defend himself were so manifest that his young hearer of necessity was in a measure impressed.

"If you will excuse me now," continued Philip Alden, "I must attend to my labors. My advice

to you, young man, as I said, is to take the first boat you can get for home."

"But what can I do about Leon?"

"Let him look after himself just the same as you will have to do."

There was no reason for Earl to remain longer and accordingly he at once departed from the room.

As he went down the stairway the manner as well as the words of the strange man whom he had just left were still strong in their impression on the excited boy.

When he went out upon the street and walked as rapidly as possible toward Trafalgar Square his suspicions of the man whom he had recently left returned in full force. Not a word had been said about the girl, and the man whom Philip Alden had met in Chester, evidently, as Earl thought, by arrangement.

There was no doubt now in the boy's mind that all three of the mysterious people were in league and that it was his duty to impart his information to those who were in authority.

On the corner he stopped and watched a body of troops that were marching swiftly past him. With what a swing did these boys, for the most of them were young, sweep forward in time with

the music of the fife and drum corps. The martial music in itself was stirring and Earl felt the response in his own heart.

Hurriedly he turned into the nearby street and he made his way as quickly as possible to his hotel.

When he entered, the first man whom he saw was an officer in the British army who stood nearby conversing with two ladies. So excited was Earl that he at once approached the man and said, "Pardon me, but I have something of great importance to say to you."

Both ladies looked somewhat startled at the interruption and for a moment the officer was inclined to ignore the request. However, apparently impressed by Earl's manifest earnestness, he stepped to one side and as he did so said to Earl, "Now tell me what you want to say."

CHAPTER XX

EARL REPORTS

THUS bidden, Earl hastily began his story. He had, however, spoken but a few words before he saw that the officer was deeply interested as he said to him, "Pardon me. If you will wait a moment, I will excuse myself to the ladies and we will go to a room where we can be by ourselves."

In a moment the officer returned and said, "I have seen the manager and we are to have a room to ourselves. Come with me to the lift."

A few minutes afterward Earl and the man, who now told him that his name was Captain Swain, were seated on opposite sides of a small table in a room which the captain had secured.

"Now, then, pray proceed with your story," said Captain Swain.

"I had a letter of introduction to Mr. Philip Alden."

"Did you know who gave it to you?"

"Yes, sir. A German friend of my father. His name was Mr. Schwartz."

"And you say you presented this letter on shipboard?"

"Yes, sir."

"What ship?"

"The *Gallic.*"

"Pray, go on."

"Just before we landed, Mr. Alden came to me with a package which he asked me to take for him and mail after we should go to London. I took the package and the letter he gave me, but as soon as my brother and I went down to Chester, Mr. Alden came there and asked me to give him back the package. While I was there a man came who plainly was a friend of Mr. Alden. They had a long interview in my room and when it ended and I went back I found a piece of paper which they had left."

"What was the paper?" inquired the captain.

"It was thin, almost tissue paper."

"What was on it?"

"At first I did not think anything was on it, but very soon I saw some faint outlines that looked like drawings of earth-works."

"Please continue your story."

"The man plainly was a German. Later, on my bicycle, I came down through the Midlands and went to Lowestoft to visit some of my father's

cousins. They had gone away for their holiday, so I decided to start on for London."

"Was your brother with you?"

"No, sir. He had gone on to France. A heavy shower came up after I started from Lowestoft and I stopped at a little cottage on the coast. When the shower cleared up a girl who was there—"

"A member of the family?"

"I thought so at the time, but I am not so sure now. This girl went out to the dove-cote and an old sailor was there too. They had some wonderful pigeons. They let three carriers go."

"Did you know whether or not they sent any letters by the pigeons?"

"Yes, sir. I guess they did. At any rate the old sailor-man tied a paper on a leg of each bird. He said the birds were flying to London."

"Do you think they came here?"

"I don't know. I don't believe they did. After they had circled, everyone of them started in the same direction."

"And that was out to sea?"

"Yes, sir. They started directly eastward."

"You did not see Philip Alden at the place where you stopped?"

"No, sir. The next time I saw him was after I

came to London. He had asked me to look him up and one day when I did not have anything else to do, I thought of him and went to his office."

"Where was it?"

"In Fleet Street. It isn't much of an office. It is a dingy old room in the back of the top floor of a tumbled-down old house."

"Did you go to his office?"

"Yes, sir."

"Was anyone there?"

"Only a little office boy covered with buttons. Mr. Alden told me that he was going out in his motor car and invited me to go with him. We went to a place twelve or fifteen miles beyond the outskirts of London and stopped at a little farm-house. I did not think much about it until I found that there was a dove-cote there and some wonderful pigeons. Mr. Alden said they were his. He said, too, that he was a great pigeon-fancier but that he could not raise any in the city, of course, so he had them bred out there. When we started back to the city he brought three or four of the birds with him in a basket."

"Carriers?"

"Yes, sir. By the way, I forgot to tell you, Captain Swain, that up near Lowestoft where I stopped I am sure that one of the letters the sailor

tied to the leg of one of those birds was written in German. After Mr. Alden and I started in his motor car we had not gone very far before away behind us a big gray car showed up. It was coming like mad. The first thing I knew Mr. Alden spoke to his chauffeur some words which I did not understand and our own car instantly was tearing across the country. I felt quite sure at the time that the other car was chasing us. We kept up the race for fifteen or twenty minutes. We tore through the little villages and almost had a collision or two and finally Philip Alden managed to throw the pursuers off the track."

"How did he do it?"

"After we turned a corner he ran into a garage, put up the top of the car and kept out of sight. After the other car passed he doubled on his tracks, went into a private roadway and then sent me back to London in the car while he got out and came by the underground."

"Were you not suspicious of him then?" inquired the Captain. He was listening intently to Earl's story.

"I thought it was very strange, but he is a wonderful man. Somehow he makes you believe that what he tells you, no matter what it is, must be true. I didn't see him again for some time—

until just before I decided to start for France. Indeed I had sent on most of my belongings when Mr. Alden invited me to go down the Thames with him in a boat. We went clear down to Dover. It was a wonderful sail and whatever comes I am glad I had it. After we arrived at Dover he had a permit to take us up to the fort, at least to the outer part. Ever since I had given him my letter of introduction he had been urging me to take as many photographs as possible. Oh, I forgot to tell you," said Earl, "I came on him once on shipboard right after he had had a wireless message."

"From whom?" inquired the officer.

"I don't know. He thought he was alone when he received it and when he found I was close by, at first he was furiously angry. But he quieted down in a minute when he found I was not trying to spy on him."

"Did you take any pictures at Dover?"

"Yes, sir. And I am sorry I did."

The Captain smiled slightly as he said, "How is that, sir?"

"Why, I was arrested. At least, *almost* arrested. Somehow Mr. Alden disappeared after he had taken a roll of my films. I sat down there on a bench and waited for him an hour and a half and he did not come, so then I decided not to wait

any longer and started for the dock to take the boat for Calais. Before I went on board, a man touched me on the shoulder and told me I was wanted at the fort and so I went back and found I was under arrest. They found on me the package which Mr. Alden had given me to keep for him and the paper I had put in my pocket at Chester and forgotten all about, and the pictures I had just taken. They were very good to me, but they kept me there until through the American ambassador they got word from home. Finally when at last I was free, the Colonel told me not to go to France. I know now why it all was, though he did not explain much to me."

"Then you came back to London?"

"Yes, sir. I found the people here so excited over the declaration of war and all, that I almost forgot about Philip Alden and my troubles at Dover, and the funny part of it was that they thought that my name was Philip Alden. I went up to Trafalgar Square to see the crowd and right near me I heard the voice of the old German who had been at Chester with Mr. Alden."

"Did he look like the sailor who flew the pigeons?"

"Why, no, sir," exclaimed Earl quickly. "And yet, and yet," he said slowly, "when I think of it

I am not sure but the voices of the two men did sound very much alike."

Captain Swain nodded his head but did not speak, and Earl continued, "With him was the girl who had been helping fly the pigeons. I wonder if it could have been the same man. Well, at any rate, when I heard the voice I looked around and saw the man and the girl and I decided to follow them when they left the crowd. I had my troubles because I never was in such a crowd in my life. I kept after them up the Strand and on into Fleet Street, but finally lost them and then I decided that I would go to Mr. Alden's office and see if they showed up there."

"Did they?" inquired the Captain quickly.

"Yes, sir. I found the girl there, but she would not let me come into the room. Then I hid in a jog in the hallway and waited to see if anyone else came."

"Did anyone come?"

"Yes, sir. Pretty soon the old German came, just as I thought he would. I did not speak to him as he went straight to the room. I could hear him and the girl talking in low tones and then I rapped on the door again. They would not let me in, but they turned out the light and I could not hear any voices then so I decided to wait a

little longer. I was a good deal surprised when after a few minutes Philip Alden himself came up the stairway. I spoke to him—"

"And you say you were alone in the hall?" interrupted the Captain.

"Yes, sir," replied Earl unaware that there was anything unusual in his statement. "I talked with him in the hallway a while and then we went into his room. But the strange part of it is there wasn't anyone there when we entered and I could take my oath that neither the girl nor the man had come outside."

"Yes, yes," said the officer quickly. "What happened then?"

"Nothing. Mr. Alden told me he was a German and he said that Germany would not leave very much of England when the war was finished."

"He did, did he?" exclaimed Captain Swain. "I fancy that remains to be seen. Now, young man, I am grateful to you for what you have told me. Have you spoken concerning this matter to anyone?"

"No, sir."

"Are you stopping here at the Victoria?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long do you expect to be here?"

"I do not know," replied Earl. "I am waiting for some word from my father or my brother."

"You are likely to be here until to-morrow?"

"I expect to be."

"Very well. I trust you will keep in mind what I have said about silence and it may be that we shall require your aid in locating the place where you went in the motor car."

"Do you know who Philip Alden is?" inquired Earl quickly.

Captain Swain smiled and did not reply directly as he extended his hand and said, "I must go at once. Please accept my thanks for your aid. If we call you on the telephone within the next twenty-four hours you will be here to reply, will you not?"

"Yes, sir,"

Earl remained standing as he watched the captain quickly withdraw from the room and then he returned to the lobby of the hotel.

CHAPTER XXI

A RIDE WITH THE CAPTAIN

IT was late when Earl went to his room and prepared for bed. The stirring events of the day and especially the final words of Captain Swain had left him in a state of excitement from which it was long before he could obtain relief. Again and again he thought of his experiences in the dim hallway of the old building in which Philip Alden had his office. It was a marvel to him now as he looked back to think that he had escaped so easily.

If Mr. Alden and the old German were spies, as he now was convinced they were without question, they were desperate men. With their own lives in peril it was not to be expected that they would stop short of anything which would insure their safety.

The simplicity with which Philip Alden had spoken of his admiration for the fatherland and the conviction he had expressed in the ability of the Kaiser and the German soldiers to win, no matter how great the odds against them might be,

caused Earl to smile at the recollection. And yet this was not unlike the character of some of his German friends. Strong they were and able in their way, but so frequently a strain of child-like simplicity was mingled with their shrewdness and mental power.

At last, however, thoughts of Philip Alden and his strange companions and the quiet and strong bearing of Captain Swain alike were forgotten and the tired boy fell asleep.

How much time had elapsed Earl was unable to decide when in some confusion he was awakened sharply from his sleep. Unable at first to determine what it was that had aroused him he sat on the side of his bed partly dazed for a moment, convinced that some unusual sound had disturbed him and yet not able to locate it, or to tell what it was.

At that moment there was a sharp ring on the telephone in his room and instantly he was aware of the cause of his awakening. Advancing at once to the side of the room where the bell was still ringing he took down the receiver and with every nerve tingling listened for what he believed would be a summons.

"Are you there?"

"Yes, sir. Who is this?"

"This is Captain Swain," came the low re-

sponse. "Can you meet me in the lobby at once?"

"Yes, sir. I will dress and come down directly."

Hastily donning his clothing Earl glanced at his watch as he left the room and saw that it was just five o'clock.

It was not that the hour was early, but that it was so late that impressed him now. It seemed to him at the moment as if he had been in bed only a very little while.

As the lift was not running Earl was compelled to walk down the stairs and when he arrived in the lobby he was well-nigh breathless. There was only one man in the place and at first Earl did not recognize him as Captain Swain, because he was not dressed in uniform.

"Good morning, sir," called the man and instantly Earl was aware that the one who was greeting him was indeed Captain Swain though clad in citizen's clothing.

"Good morning," responded the boy.

"Do you think you could find your way to that farmhouse where you went with Philip Alden?"

"I am not sure."

"You are willing to try?"

"Yes, sir, I shall be glad to do my best, but we

took so many twists and turns on our way out and came back to London by a different route so that I am not at all sure I shall be able to find the way."

"Of course you have had no breakfast."

"No, sir."

"Well, I have ordered some and it is now ready for us both. We will go into the dining-room and I can explain to you there more fully just what I want you to do."

In the dim light Earl still was able to see when he looked across the little table at his host that the Captain was very eager although his manner was quiet and self-possessed.

"I am exceedingly desirous," he explained, "of finding that place. You have given us a word which may be of great service to us. If you can find the place we shall be under renewed obligations to you."

"I know the general direction," replied Earl, "and it may be that I shall be able to recognize some of the places when I come to them."

"Would you know the farmhouse?"

"Yes, sir, I surely should know that."

A few minutes later Earl followed the captain as he led the way to the street in front of the hotel where a huge and a powerful automobile was awaiting them.

Motioning to the boy to take his seat the captain joined him and said to the chauffeur, "Go first to Hyde Park."

Turning to Earl he said, "You told us that you passed that place, did you not?"

"Yes, sir."

Not a word was spoken until the great car had passed through the silent streets and arrived at the entrance to the beautiful gardens.

"Straight ahead," called Earl as the driver hesitated a moment.

For a time the boy's entire attention was devoted to the road which the car was to follow.

Several times the little party was compelled to retrace its way and when the journey was renewed there were misgivings in the heart of Earl as to whether or not he had selected the true course.

After the borders of the great city had been passed and the car was speeding along the country roads Earl was convinced that they were going in the proper direction.

The car was moving rapidly, but not so fast as to prevent conversation. Relieved by the conviction that he was on the proper course, Earl's attention in a measure relaxed and he turned with interest to the officer seated beside him.

"We have the road pretty much to ourselves," said Captain Swain quietly.

"Yes, sir. We haven't met anyone except some of the country people taking their produce to market. It seems incredible," he added, "that Great Britain is in a state of war."

As Earl looked about him it did indeed seem as if war was an impossibility. The fresh air of the early morning was as soft as the beauty of the scenes that greeted his eyes on every side. The gently rolling country was still fresh and green. The cattle in the pastures and the very horses and sheep all seemed to be parts of a peaceful scene which nothing could interrupt.

A moment later, however, thoughts of the errand upon which he and his companion were bound brought a sharp contrast. Earl's thoughts reflected to Philip Alden and he was convinced that if the man should be caught it would go hard with him. And in a way Earl was glad at the thought. His own sympathies were very strongly with the countries which were banded together in the struggle against the great German power.

He recalled the faces of his mother's brother and his wife when he had bidden them good-by at the dock in New York only a few months before this time. With his father's family he was not so

well acquainted and his failure to find any of his cousins at home had not increased his knowledge of them; and yet somehow blood is thicker than water and Earl was becoming stronger every day in his desire for his kindred to win in the terrific struggle which was going on in Europe.

His anxiety for his brother had not been so keen of late, for he assured himself that Leon was one who would be able to take good care of himself no matter into what troubles he might fall.

"Tell me, Captain Swain," he said, turning to his companion, "are the London people afraid of the Zeppelins? Philip Alden says they can smash London."

"I fancy we shall know more of that later," said the Captain quietly, a faint smile appearing on his face as he spoke.

"Which is the largest German dirigible?"

"The L 3."

"What is her horse-power?"

"Seven hundred and twenty."

"What speed can she make?"

"Fifty miles, I am told."

"Whew!" whistled Earl. "And how long can she keep going without stopping?"

"About thirty hours."

"What's to prevent her from coming across the North Sea or the English Channel in the night and dropping bombs all over London?"

"There are several things that will stand in her way," replied the captain, "although it is claimed she is able to travel eighteen hundred miles, if she goes only thirty-six miles an hour. Although it is said she has remained in the air for thirty-five hours, even that doesn't tell the whole story. If she shuts off her power she can drift as a free balloon, and it is quite likely she can carry three or four tons of explosives."

"Then I don't see what advantages you have at all against her."

"Well, in the first place she probably would come by night because she would be less likely to be seen. Of course we shall have searchlights everywhere, and if she should escape them she might do some damage with her bombs if she should drop them with extraordinary accuracy,—a feat that would be difficult in the darkness. All she could do then would be to go back again. Then, too, there might be clouds in the sky and though they would prevent our gunners from seeing the airship they would serve also in the same way to prevent the men in the airship from seeing

the city. Just as soon as daylight came a number of aëroplanes would be sent after her. They fly much faster than the dirigibles."

"Yes," said Earl, "but I understand the dirigibles have guns mounted on every side, the top as well as bottom."

"I fancy the big balloons will have their troubles."

"What will be done with Philip Alden if you find him at the farmhouse?"

Captain Swain looked sharply at Earl, as he said, "I am not at all positive that we shall find him there, but if we should I shall leave that for others to determine."

Somewhat abashed by the sharp reply Earl became silent. The huge car still sped swiftly forward and as Earl glanced about him he recognized several places which he believed were not far distant from the farmhouse he was seeking.

His interest, however, in the fate of Philip Alden became keener as he realized that in a brief time the destination he was seeking would be gained.

CHAPTER XXII

NORTHWARD

"TURN here to your left," directed Earl as the car came to a narrow road lined with hedge-rows.

For several minutes the party proceeded, the only noise being the rhythmic purr of the engine. They had not gone far, however, before Earl said, "I am afraid I have made a mistake. I do not remember any of these places we are passing."

"Take a good look," said Captain Swain. "It may be that you will recognize some landmark."

Earl, however, shook his head and in a brief time the automobile went back to the road from which they had turned.

Mortified by his mistake and yet not feeling that he was altogether to be blamed, Earl glanced keenly at the houses they were passing as the car resumed the direction in which it had been previously going.

They had not advanced far before Earl said eagerly, "We are on the right road. I remember

those poplar trees over yonder," pointing as he spoke to a row of trees that stood like stately sentinels along the border of a dark green pasture.

Ten minutes more elapsed and the silence in the car was unbroken.

Earl was aware of the eagerness of his companion to arrive at their destination as speedily as possible. He, too, was desirous not merely of assisting the man in his errand, but of justifying the statements which he himself had made. His word would be strengthened if the place where Philip Alden kept his pigeons could be found.

"That's the place!" exclaimed Earl abruptly in a low voice, as he pointed to a low, thatched brick cottage at the left of the road and not far in advance.

The manner of the captain was unchanged, although he eagerly scanned the place to which his attention had been directed.

In a brief time the car halted in front of the little house. As the captain prepared to leave, Earl said to him, "Do you want me to go with you?"

"As you like, sir."

"Then I think I will get out, but I will not go into the house."

"Perhaps it would be as well for you to accom-

pany me,'' said Captain Swain as Earl stepped out of the car.

Together the two advanced toward the house. As they passed beyond the high hedge-row in front of the cottage they saw an old man seated there apparently doing nothing except to enjoy the sunlight of the morning.

''Who lives here?'' inquired the Captain of the old man.

'' 'Ow's that?''

''Whose house is this? Who lives here?'' repeated Captain Swain.

''I'm a bit 'ard o' 'earin','' said the old man, as he placed a hand behind his ear.

Captain Swain looked keenly into the face of the man, as he said in tones that were not much louder than those which he had used before, ''Who lives here?''

''Would you mind speakin' a bit louder?'' As he spoke the old man arose and leaving his chair stood before his visitors.

Again Captain Swain said, ''Who lives here?''

''I be sorry, sir, but I cannot 'ear 'ee.''

''You ask him,'' said the captain, turning to Earl, ''if Philip Alden is here. Do not speak in a very loud voice.''

Thus bidden Earl said to the old man, "Is Mr. Philip Alden here?"

"Pip Order?" said the old man, staring blankly into the face of his younger visitor. "I won't say as 'ow I ever see him. I knew a man named Pip Brown. 'E were a prize 'un."

"Never mind," said the Captain in a low voice to Earl. Then turning to the old man he said, still without speaking very loudly, "I understand you have some pigeons for sale."

Earl was keenly observant and he was convinced that in spite of the low voice in which Captain Swain had spoken the old man understood his question.

"What is it 'ee want?" said the old man.

Captain Swain drew a sovereign from his pocket and said, "I want to buy some squabs."

There was a glitter in the eyes of his hearer, although by his actions he did not betray that he had understood the words addressed to him.

Before he could reply, however, the door into the cottage was opened by an old woman who immediately joined in the conversation. "Do 'ee want to buy some squabs?" she inquired.

"I do," replied the Captain.

"Maybe I can find two or three. 'Ow many would 'ee be wantin'?"

"I want six," replied the Captain. "I want to see them before I buy them. If they are good I will pay you a crown a pair for them."

"Come this way," said the old woman, as taking a cane she stepped forth and led the way to the rear of the cottage.

There were three large dove-cotes there and she at once led the way toward the nearest. As the visitors looked at the pigeons, old and young, that flocked about the place, they saw that they were of the common variety.

The other dove-cotes were not far distant and Earl recalled now how that Philip Alden had taken him to see them and had not even stopped at the one before which now they were waiting.

"What have you over there?" inquired Captain Swain as he pointed to the other two places about which the pigeons were flying.

"Them be fancy kinds," replied the old woman.

"Do you raise them for yourself?"

"I do."

"Then you would be willing to sell me two or three pairs of the carriers, would you not?"

The woman glanced sharply at the inquirer and then said brusquely, "It is mostly pouters and fantails."

"So I see," said the captain. "But I do not

want pouters or fan-tails. I will buy three pairs of your carriers."

"The squabs be these," said the old woman, pointing vigorously to the dove-cote nearest them.

Ignoring her suggestion the captain said, "I am not talking about squabs. I am talking about three pairs of carriers."

"And I told 'ee that we raises pouters and fan-tails."

"And carriers," suggested the captain.

"I cannot sell 'ee any carriers."

"Why not?"

"It is not in my power."

"And yet you have some carriers here?"

"Only a few, mayhap."

"I don't want many."

The woman, however, shook her head decidedly as if it would be impossible for her to consider any offer for her carrier pigeons.

"I will give you a sovereign for a pair of them," suggested the captain, as he displayed a gold coin in his extended hand.

It was plain that the temptation was strong to the old woman, but after a brief hesitation she said resolutely, "The carriers be not for sale."

"Don't they belong to you?"

"They does not, sir."

"Whose are they?"

"We are raisin' them for a gentleman."

"How often," inquired the captain quietly, "does Philip Alden come out here to see his pigeons?"

That the woman was startled by the question was instantly manifest. She ignored the query, however, and turning once more to the dove-cote in which the humbler flocks made their home, she said, "I can let 'ee 'ave six squabs."

"I have changed my mind," said the captain. "Now I want the carriers."

The old woman shook her head decidedly, but made no further response.

Earl had been deeply interested in the conversation, but obeying the slight signal from Captain Swain to withdraw he started toward the car which was waiting in the road in front of the cottage.

As he turned around the corner he came face to face with the young girl whom he had first seen flying the pigeons near Lowestoft and whom he had left, as he believed, the preceding night in the office of Philip Alden in the rambling old building on Fleet Street.

Startled as he was by the unexpected meeting the boy nevertheless glanced hastily away, fearful that his surprise would be expressed by his face.

The girl passed him without a word and as Earl looked back at her he was wondering if she had recognized him.

In confusion Earl hesitated, almost deciding to follow her as she walked toward the place where the captain and the old woman were still talking. He decided a moment later, however, that he would resume his seat in the automobile and as soon as the captain should return he would tell him of his discovery.

In a brief time Captain Swain returned to the car and as he quickly took his seat beside Earl, the latter said to him in a low voice, "Wait a minute. Do not start yet. I want to tell you something."

"What is it?" said the officer as he turned to the boy.

"Did you see a girl just a minute ago?"

"I did."

"Well, she is the one that I saw up on the coast with the old sailorman flying the pigeons. She's the same one I thought I left last night in Philip Alden's office, as he called it."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did she recognize you?"

"I do not know whether she did or not. She didn't act as if she did."

Captain Swain was silent a moment as he thought carefully over what had just been said to him.

Then without any hesitation he turned to his chauffeur and said, "We will go back, James. And do not be afraid to put on speed," he added as the car bounded forward.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE MAN AMONG THE WIRES

FOR a time no one spoke. Earl was busy with his own thoughts concerning the visit which had just been made, and he was somewhat perplexed because apparently, whatever the purpose of the visit may have been, it was not fulfilled. From all that he could learn the captain simply had had a brief interview with the woman after he had failed to make the old farmer understand what he was saying.

Apparently, too, he had not been impressed by the declaration which Earl considered to be somewhat startling that the girl whom he had met face to face near the corner of the farmhouse was the same one whom he had seen near Lowestoft when she had been helping the old sailor prepare the carrier pigeons for their flight.

He was aware that the car was moving much more swiftly than it had been on its way out to the farmhouse. Just what this meant he did not understand, but he was already aware that to ask

questions of the silent man beside him would be useless.

Twenty minutes or more had elapsed when Captain Swain turning abruptly to Earl asked, "Do you think you can find the house on the coast near Lowestoft where you saw the old sailor and this girl whom we left behind us flying their carriers?"

"I cannot find my way to the place," said Earl in surprise.

"I did not mean that," said the captain. "All I want to know is if we are near to the cottage you can take us to it?"

"Yes, sir. But it is a good hundred miles from here—"

"I know, I know," interrupted the captain sharply, "but I am planning now to go there and I want you to go with me."

"In the motor car?"

"Yes, yes. Just as we are. Is there any good reason why you cannot go?"

For a moment Earl was silent as he thought over his own perplexing problems. He was expecting to receive word from Leon and from his father which might cause him to change his plans instantly, if he could be said to have any fixed plans at all.

"It is most important," said the captain. "I deeply appreciate your kindness in helping us thus far. Chance or fortune has given you some information which may lead to very important action. It may mean much for our interests. I shall be more pleased than I can tell you if you will go with me now. The ride will not require more than four hours and I do not think we shall remain any considerable time after we arrive. Then we can either come directly back to London to-night, or if you prefer you may stop at some hotel and come back to-morrow."

"Yes, sir. I will go," said Earl promptly.

"Thank you, kindly."

Nothing more was said for a time and Earl soon was deeply interested in the country through which they were passing so swiftly. It was not long before he was aware that Captain Swain did not plan to return through London but was riding directly forward, apparently sure of his way and avoiding the great city.

The speed of the car at times rose to forty-five and even fifty miles an hour. Even when they entered some of the little villages the speed was only partly slackened, while the captain with grim set face looked anxiously on every side.

About one o'clock, when they had entered an

unusually attractive hamlet, Captain Swain said abruptly to the chauffeur, "We will stop here for luncheon, James."

Instantly the car drew up in front of an attractive little inn and the passengers alighted.

To all appearances the anxiety of the captain was now gone. While they were seated at the table in the well kept little dining-room he entered more fully into the conversation and willingly responded to many of the questions which the eager boy wanted to ask.

"Where is the German fleet now?" inquired Earl.

The captain smiled as he replied, "No one is supposed to know."

"The paper last night said it was bottled up in the Kiel Canal."

"That will do as well as any other place," said the captain, smiling as he spoke. "A veil has been drawn over the military and naval activities of Britain and it will not be lifted until something has been done. As I cannot tell you where our fighting ships are, and as the Germans have been equally careful, no one outside the navy, at least, can locate them."

"But the paper said they were in the Kiel Canal. I wish you would tell me just where that is."

"It runs from the harbor of Kiel on the Baltic Sea to Brundesbuttle on the Elbe estuary."

"Why was it made?"

"I fancy the first purpose was to cut off the long and rather hazardous passage through the Cattegat and around the northern end of Denmark."

"But I understand that the Kiel Canal is a good deal more than a mere passage for merchantmen. It is a great naval waterway, isn't it?"

"It is, most assuredly. The very first year it was opened some twenty thousand vessels passed through it. It has steadily grown in importance until about sixty thousand ships pass through it every year."

"Whew!" whistled Earl. "That's almost as many as go through the Suez Canal."

"More," said the captain. "If you were in Germany you would not hear the canal referred to as the Kiel Canal very often."

"What do they call it?"

"The Kaiser Wilhelm Canal."

"Is it very long?"

"Sixty-one miles."

"When was it begun?"

"It was begun in 1887. It was supposed to be completed in 1895 at a cost of nearly forty million dollars, as you say in the States."

"What do you mean when you say 'supposed to be completed'?"

"Just what I said. When the dreadnought type of battleship appeared it was found necessary to enlarge and deepen the canal. It cost more to make the changes by fifty million dollars than it did to dig the canal in the first place."

"When was that work done?"

"The canal was formally opened to the world last April. Fortunately," the captain added bitterly, "the world did not combine to declare war on the Kaiser until right after he had completed his great military waterway. I consider that the Allies have been most considerate."

"I should say so," said Earl. "Which is larger, our Panama Canal or this Kiel Canal?"

"Kiel has locks that are eighty-two feet longer and thirty-seven and one-half feet wider than your Panama Canal and they have a greater depth by four feet. It has been built to accommodate a sixty-thousand-ton ship, if such a monster is ever realized in the future."

"How long are the locks?"

"The new ones are ten hundred and eighty-two feet long, one hundred and forty-seven and one-half feet wide and they have a depth of forty-five feet of water over the sills."

"You did not tell me how wide the canal is."

"Four hundred feet wide on the surface and one hundred and fifty feet at the bottom. There are eleven sidings in which ships may pass. It is certainly a wonderful piece of work and the marvel of it all is that these changes were all made without any interruption to the traffic."

"Do you think the British fleet will be able to stand against the German?"

"It ought to," replied the captain dryly. "It outnumbers it nearly two to one."

"Yes, but the fleet is scattered all over the world," suggested Earl.

"There are sufficient left here to do the work," affirmed the captain quietly.

"I wish they would go at it then and finish up the job," said Earl impulsively.

The captain smiled as he said, "You must wait. In good time you will hear from our navy."

"I hope it will be good news," said Earl.

When the journey was resumed neither of the travelers appeared to be inclined to talk.

In silence they sped swiftly over the changing English countryside and yet they were moving so rapidly that to Earl many of the places seemed almost to fade into one.

The ride, however, was one which he keenly en-

joyed and when, near dusk, his companion turned and said to him, "Do you find any part of this region familiar?" he looked about him with increased interest. Surely he had been in this part of England before. The little church on their right, its Gothic sides covered with ivy no one could say how old, he had noticed on his trip down the coast.

"Yes, sir," he said to the captain. "I am sure I know where we are now. I do not think the cottage is very far from here."

"About how far?"

"Of course I cannot say, but I remember that I came here soon after I started out after the storm."

For three miles more the journey continued, Earl frequently finding places that were familiar. He was confident now that they were on the right road and soon were to arrive at their destination.

Abruptly Captain Swain turned to the chauffeur and said, "James, stop the car."

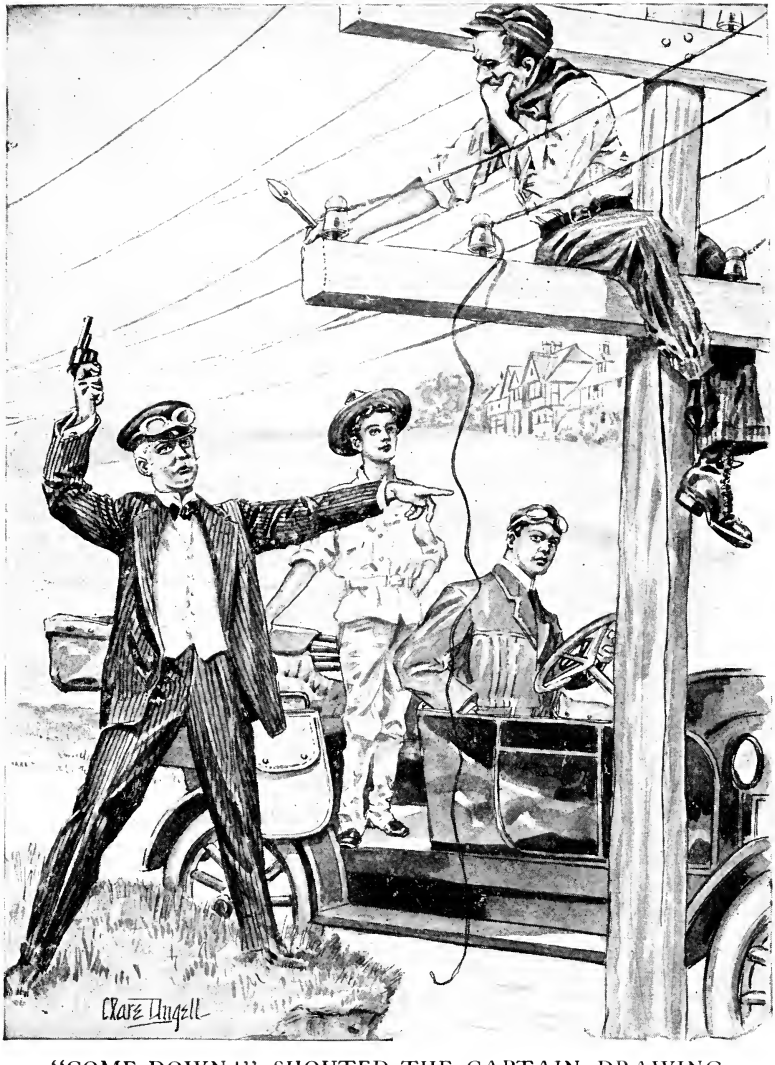
Almost instantly the speed was shut off and the huge car came to a standstill.

Opening the door and leaping from his seat, Captain Swain ran swiftly up the side of the bank near the road. Earl, who was following his movements, instantly was interested but he was unable

to account for the sudden activity of the captain. In a brief time, however, he understood, for Captain Swain, running quickly to a place on the bank where the telegraph line had been placed stopped and looking above him shouted, "Come down!" At the same time he drew his revolver and held it in his hand.

Glancing in the direction in which Captain Swain was looking Earl saw a man crouching against the support of the wires. He was, of course, several yards above the angry officer, but it was not plain just what he was doing there, nor could Earl understand the reason for the sudden excitement or anger of his fellow-traveler.

Greatly aroused, he looked at both men, awaiting the explanation of the strange sight.



"COME DOWN!" SHOUTED THE CAPTAIN DRAWING HIS REVOLVER.

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CHAPTER XXIV

A LONE WIDOW'S COTTAGE

FOR a brief moment neither man moved from his position. The captain standing with his drawn revolver, the man looking down upon him quiet and motionless presented a picture which Earl never was able to forget. What it all meant was still a mystery to him. Captain Swain, usually so dignified, had leaped from the car as excited as a boy.

The situation soon changed, however. Without a word having been spoken the man began to descend from his place among the wires.

He came slowly and before he reached the ground Captain Swain, turning sharply to the chauffeur, said, "James, come here."

As the driver instantly obeyed the captain again inquired, "Are you ready?"

The chauffeur nodded his head in reply and both awaited the coming of the man who was slowly descending.

As soon as the prisoner stood on the ground,

Captain Swain said sharply to his companion, "We must search him."

Excited as Earl was by the scene before him, he was scarcely prepared for the quiet manner in which the prisoner was acting. He offered no resistance and when the chauffeur removed his coat, and, after searching in every pocket, stripped the lining from it, even then he did not speak. A revolver was taken from his belt and placed on the ground. The search, however, was continued. Once an automobile which passed stopped and in excitement two men leaped from the car and ran to the assistance of the man whom plainly they believed to be a victim of highway robbery. A quietly spoken word from the captain, however, instantly caused the people to return to their car. Although every occupant was looking behind him as the car departed there was no delay and in a brief time it disappeared from sight.

Apparently Captain Swain was unmindful of any comments his strange actions by the roadside might arouse.

At last, when the thorough search was completed, Captain Swain brought the revolver which he had found and a small package which he placed in Earl's hands. "Keep those for me, lad, until I come back," he said.

Then quickly turning to the place where the chauffeur was standing guard over the prisoner, the captain produced a pair of handcuffs, which he snapped about the wrists of the motionless prisoner.

Still unresisting, the man followed his captors to the car.

"Would you mind taking the seat in front?" inquired Captain Swain of Earl.

"I shall be glad to," responded Earl quickly, as instantly he took the seat assigned to him. The prisoner then was thrust into the rear and Captain Swain speedily seated himself beside him.

"You might give me those papers and the revolver," suggested Captain Swain to Earl.

As the boy at once handed the captain the articles requested, he said, "And what are those things?" As he spoke Earl pointed to a strange looking instrument on the floor of the car.

"Nippers?" The puzzled expression on Earl's face showed that he did not understand the reference.

"He was trying to cut the wires," explained the captain. "He is not the only one who has been caught at that trick."

For a brief time no one spoke as the car sped swiftly forward. Then Captain Swain reached

forward and touching Earl upon the shoulder said, "Look at the prisoner closely. Do you recall having seen him before?"

Already several times Earl had looked keenly at the man whom the captain had made his prisoner. He was an elderly man and somehow the boy was unable to escape the impression that he had seen him somewhere before.

Turning to the captain, Earl said, "He looks familiar to me, but I cannot say just where I saw him. If I could hear him speak, perhaps I should recognize his voice, for I remember voices better than I do faces."

"Look at him closely," again suggested the captain, "and see if he resembles the old man who met Philip Alden at the hotel in Chester."

"I believe he is the same man!" said Earl quickly. "When I saw him in the crowd at Trafalgar Square it was in the night and I should not have recognized him at all if he had been alone, but he was with the girl whom I knew right away."

"Look at him again," said Captain Swain. "See if he looks at all like the old sailor who was flying pigeons up here near Lowestoft."

It had not occurred to the excited boy to relate the man who met Philip Alden at Chester and the flyer of the carrier pigeons. As he recalled the

sight he was somewhat startled when he remembered that indeed the two men were apparently nearly of the same age and size. If the two were indentical then it must be that he had used a disguise. The suggestion was somewhat startling and again Earl keenly scanned the features of the prisoner.

"I cannot say," he said shaking his head. "I am not sure."

"And yet they might be the same man, might they not?" inquired the captain.

"I am not sure," repeated Earl. "They are about the same size and look about as old as each other, but whether or not they are the same one I cannot say. Are we going on?" he inquired.

"Most assuredly. Why should we turn back?"

"I did not know," said Earl with some confusion. "You have got a man—"

"But I am not yet certain whether he is the man I want or not," said the captain. "We must continue our journey. It cannot be much further."

"No," said Earl quickly. "It is that little cottage right ahead of us on the right."

A low word from the captain caused the chauffeur to run more slowly. As they approached the place they were seeking, Earl's excitement in-

creased, although he was aware that neither of his companions apparently gave him any heed.

The prisoner was stolid and if he felt any interest in the arrival at the cottage he did not betray it by his manner. He still sat looking quietly down into the bottom of the car, glancing neither to his right nor left.

"Would you mind," said the captain to Earl when the car stopped in the road in front of their destination; "would you mind going to the house and ascertaining for us who is there?"

"What shall I say?" inquired Earl as he stepped from the car.

"I don't care as to that," said the captain. "Anything that will bring the people to the door."

Somewhat puzzled as to what he should say or do, Earl nevertheless quickly entered the little yard and then mounting the steps of the piazza announced his presence by means of the huge iron knocker on the front door.

In response to his summons the door was opened by a woman, whom he instantly recognized. She was the one who had given him shelter a few days before when he had been overtaken by the storm.

"Good evening," he said as the woman stood before him. Without waiting for her to respond he continued, "Captain Swain is in the motor car

out here and he would like to have you come there a minute."

"Wot is it he might be wantin'?" inquired the woman suspiciously.

"He will explain that to you," said Earl lightly.

Hesitating only a few minutes the woman smoothed down her dress and adjusted her hair and then quickly followed as Earl led the way to the automobile.

When they approached he said to the captain, "Here is the woman you wanted to see. I told her you wanted to speak to her."

"Quite so," responded the captain. "I wish to inquire, madam, if you recognize this man?" As he spoke, Captain Swain placed his hand upon the knee of his prisoner.

It was instantly manifest that the wire-cutter was not a stranger to the woman, although she said sharply, "And 'ow should I be a-knowin' of him?"

"I want you to stay here with me a minute," said the captain in a low voice. Then turning to Earl he added, "I shall be glad if you will go with James into the house and make a thorough search. If you find anything suspicious bring it out. Stop a moment," he added. "I think I will have James do most of the searching and I will ask you to go to the telephone—"

"And wot is to become o' me, I should like to harsk?" demanded the woman.

"Nothing is going to harm you unless you do something or we find something which—"

"By wot right," broke in the woman sharply, "might I be harskin', do you come to a lone widow's 'ouse and start searchin'?"

"All that will be explained later. Don't make any protest and you will save trouble, if you will stand quietly where you are." As he spoke the captain showed her the revolver he was holding in his hand.

As Earl leaped from the car he intercepted a quick glance between the prisoner and the woman, but it was only for an instant, for the man again bowed his head and apparently was looking only upon the floor of the automobile.

As he accompanied the chauffeur into the house Earl looked at his companion with increasing interest. Was the man merely a driver as he appeared to be, or was he one in authority who had come with Captain Swain disguised in a manner to avoid undue attention? Earl was beginning to suspect that the man was different from what he at first thought him to be.

When they entered the house no one was seen within. The chauffeur at once approached an old

secretary desk that was standing at one end of the room and pulling upon the drawers quickly began his search.

Earl, however, following the directions of the captain, hastily moved to the telephone and took down the receiver. Even in his excitement he was startled by the words he heard when he placed the instrument to his ear.

CHAPTER XXV

OVER THE TELEPHONE

THE words were spoken in German. When they were repeated in a somewhat louder tone, Earl was convinced that the person at the other end of the line was evidently expecting some message and impatiently was expressing his feelings.

Startled as Earl was, he nevertheless kept the receiver to his ear until several times the impatient man repeated the statement he had made.

The voice of the speaker sounded distinctly over the wire and Earl's interest increased as he was positive that he recognized it. However, he was unable to carry on a conversation in German and when the first break in the hurried statements came, he said in English, "Hello, who is this?"

Earl heard a startled exclamation and then abruptly the conversation ceased. Plainly the other man had rung off.

Mystified by what he had heard Earl turned from the telephone and rejoined the chauffeur, who

apparently had just completed his investigation of the old desk.

"What did you get on the telephone?" inquired James.

"The man rang off before I could understand anything he said."

James laughed slightly as he thrust certain papers into his pocket, and then said, "I fancy we are ready to return. However, while I go out to ask the captain you might go out and see what has taken place in the dove-cotes."

Earl quickly departed from the house and started toward the place where he had seen the sailor and the girl start the carrier pigeons on their flight.

When he came to the rear of the garden where the dove-cotes were standing he was astonished to see that no pigeons were there. He stared at the place a moment almost convinced that he must have made a mistake. Perhaps this was not the cottage at which he had stopped. There were so many of the same size and built on the same plan all along the country road that it would not be surprising if he had mistaken one house for another. The dove-cotes, however, were standing just as they had been and as he glanced about the garden he was convinced that he was correct.

This was the place where he had witnessed the flight of the pigeons.

And yet not a pigeon was to be seen in the garden. Not many hours had elapsed since he had been there and the sudden change in the appearance of the place was confusing. What had become of the birds?

Convinced that the house at which he had now stopped was the one in which he had sought refuge in the storm, for the woman whom the captain had detained in the road was certainly the one whom he had seen there at the time of his previous visit, he hastily ran down the little pathway to rejoin his companion.

When he arrived at the gate he stopped and stared blankly all about him. The automobile was gone! Not one of the party was to be seen in the vicinity. What could it all mean? For a moment Earl was so confused that he was tempted to believe that he must be mistaken after all. It was some other place where he had stopped with the captain and his mysterious chauffeur. But the woman also was gone. To convince himself that this was true Earl turned back into the house. The door was still open. The drawers of the old secretary were just as James had left them, but he was not able to find the woman anywhere. Sev-

eral times he shouted, but no response was given to his hail. Quickly Earl returned to the road, but no vision of his missing friends was to be seen.

He waited several minutes, looking frequently first up and then down the road, but as far as he was able to see no one was within sight.

Ten minutes elapsed and still the captain did not return. Earl had striven to convince himself that the party had gone to take the prisoner to some place of safety, but had Captain Swain taken the woman also? Certainly she was not in the house, and yet the car was gone.

The dusk was deepening and Earl was aware that he had no prospect of securing supper. He laughed ruefully as he felt in his pocket and remembered also that he had no money. It had been impossible for him to draw anything on his letter of credit and the tourist agency to which he had gone soon after his return to London had charged him such an outrageous fee for advancing him money that he had indignantly refused to have anything more to do with them.

Earl waited a half-hour longer by the little gate, hoping all the time that Captain Swain would return, but the moments passed slowly and the huge touring car did not come back.

He did not have in his pocket even the sixpence

necessary to send a telegram. This fact, together with no immediate prospect of supper, to say nothing of any lodging for the night, finally caused Earl to decide to go down to the little station which they had lately passed and see if the agent would be willing to take his watch as security for a ticket to London.

Instantly walking down the road he came in a few moments to the pretty little station, but found himself on the wrong side for trains that went to the great city. Turning to a lad on the platform he inquired, "How do I get to the other side of the station?"

"Go down to the bottom and then go up to the top," replied the boy.

"What?" demanded Earl.

The lad repeated his statement in still more guttural tones than he had used before, but the young American was not enlightened by his explanation. Turning to a woman who was approaching Earl repeated his question. To his astonishment she replied, " 'Ee better go down to the bottom and then go hup to the top."

Were all the people in England crazy? Earl stared blankly at the woman, whose face was not unkind in its expression. Suspecting that he had not understood her words, she pointed as she said

again, "All 'ee 'as to do is to go down to the bottom and then go hup to the top."

Almost in despair Earl again turned to the boy, "Won't you be good enough to show me where I am to go?"

"It is simple," said the boy. "Just go down to the bottom and turn to your left and go up to the top."

"Surely," thought Earl, "either I must be demented or the people of whom I ask the simple direction must be out of their minds."

"I will give you a sixpence," began Earl, "if you will take my hand and lead me to the platform where I can take a train for London." He stopped abruptly as he recalled his penniless condition. "No, I won't, for I haven't a sixpence in my pocket."

" 'E don't need a sixpence," said the boy; "all 'e has to do is to go down to the bottom and go up to the top." As the boy pointed as he spoke toward the rear of the platform Earl decided to follow his directions, at least that far. When he came to the street he abruptly recalled the fact that the English use different expressions from Americans in describing directions on a street. Up the street is to go to the "top," down the street is to go to the "bottom." It was clear in his mind now

what the directions implied. He was to go to the bottom of the street and then turn to his left and go to the top of that one and right near it he would find the station.

When he found his conjecture correct he was further disappointed to find the window of the ticket office closed. Turning abruptly away he decided to go back to the house where he had been left by Captain Swain. It might be that the officer had returned by this time. If he had not, waiting there would be as easy as anywhere and, besides, he was not without hope that he might find something in the house to eat, for which he might leave his watch or scarf-pin as security.

Upon his arrival he saw that the door of the house was still open, but he could not discover any signs of the presence or of the coming of Captain Swain. Inclined to feel somewhat indignant at his desertion, for he had taken the long ride upon the urgent request of the captain and not because he had desired it, he finally decided to reënter the house and make such investigations for food as he might be able.

How strangely his footsteps sounded as he entered the empty house. The place seemed for the moment almost uncanny. Earl wondered what Leon would say if he could see him now, stealthily

moving about in the dim light in a strange house.

He succeeded in entering the plain little pantry and his search was soon rewarded by the discovery of a part of a loaf of rye bread.

In the midst of his occupation, Earl started almost as if he had been guilty of some crime when there was a loud blast upon an automobile horn that sounded almost as if it were at the very door of the cottage. In a moment, however, he was aware that the summons probably indicated the return of his recent companion.

Running to the door Earl found his surmise correct. Before him stood the huge car and out of it were coming Captain Swain and the woman whom they had found in the house. The captain was leading her by her arm and with her at once entered the house. Instead of responding to the questions Earl asked, the officer at once directed the woman to the telephone.

"Now call him," ordered Captain Swain sternly, as taking down the receiver he ordered the woman to speak into the transmitter.

As she hesitated a moment he said sternly, "Do as I tell you."

Plainly the woman dared not refuse and instantly spoke a few words in German.

Earl was standing so near to her at the time that he was able to hear what she said, although he could not understand it all.

The captain still stood with the receiver at his ear and still was holding the woman by her arm.

Earl noticed that she had not called up anyone and he was wondering if the wire was a private one, because he himself had heard the voice when he had used the telephone that plainly did not belong to the central office.

Quickly, however, he gave his entire attention to the woman at the telephone. Someone was speaking in German and it was plain to Earl that whoever he might be he was not aware of the fact that the receiver was held by an officer in the British army. His interest became stronger when he heard the name of Philip Alden twice spoken by the old woman, as she talked to some invisible party. He believed that he had found the meaning of Captain Swain's strange actions in demanding of the old woman that she should make use of the telephone.

The conversation soon ceased and Captain Swain replaced the receiver.

"Now come with me," he said to Earl, as he turned away.

Before he departed from the room, however, he

drew a knife from his pocket and severed the wire of the telephone. "I fancy we are ready now for our return to London."

"To-night?" inquired Earl blankly.

"To-night," said the captain quietly.

In a brief time the automobile, its pathway illumined by unusually large burners, was speeding over the roads almost as swiftly as it had made the trip up the coast.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE WORK OF THE SPIES

NO explanation had been given Earl by Captain Swain concerning his abrupt departure and no less strange return.

Earl saw that the old German whom he had made a prisoner was no longer in the car. He was tempted to inquire of his companion what had been done with the suspected spy, but the attitude of the captain was not encouraging and Earl wisely held his peace.

It was not difficult, however, for him to surmise what had befallen the man. The temper of the English people had been greatly aroused by the reports of numerous spies who were said to be busy not merely in the great city, but near all the fortresses, in the midst of the fleet and in many of the coast towns. Naturally Earl shared in the prevailing alarm which was confined to no one country. In Germany many English and Americans had been arrested under the suspicion of being English spies. In France the same thing had been more or less true. So Earl understood

that the anxiety and anger of the English people were not unlike that which left its impression upon all the contending nations.

It was manifest to Earl that his companion was eager to make the best possible time back to London. On and on sped the car, the speed seldom being slackened. As the hours passed and midnight drew near there were few interruptions when the swiftly moving automobile thundered into the little hamlets.

Nearly an hour had passed after midnight, or as nearly as Earl was able to estimate the passing of the time, as the night was so dark that he could not see the face of his watch. They were approaching a junction of several railroads and Earl saw the faint outlines of the various tracks that all met in the little town toward which they were speeding.

When they were on the border of the little place suddenly there was a loud report. For a moment even Captain Swain was startled, so sudden was the terrific noise breaking in upon the stillness of the night.

"A blow-out," said James laconically, as he turned to the occupants of the seat in the rear.

A smothered exclamation of dismay or anger escaped the lips of Captain Swain and then he

leaped out of the car to ascertain what might be done.

In the midst of their occupation, in which Earl at once joined, there was a loud call and shouts from the place near one of the railways only a few yards away. There were more shouts and one or two shots were fired and above all were sounds of the scurrying feet of men who were attempting to advance to the place where the automobile had stopped.

Instantly dropping their implements Captain Swain and the chauffeur drawing their revolvers ran into the road and faced the oncoming fugitives.

It was evident there were several of these.

"Halt!" shouted Captain Swain. "Halt or I shall fire!"

Instantly the fleeing men scattered, three of the four succeeding in making their way into a side street, while the fourth was speedily seized by the captain and his companion.

Before any investigations could be made a crowd of men, some of them partly dressed and all excited, approached the automobile to which the captain had conducted his prisoner.

A hasty conference was held, the result of which was that handcuffs were placed upon the

prisoner and he was ordered to take a seat in the car beside Captain Swain in the rear seat, Earl once more resuming his seat in front with James.

The excited young American had heard enough of the conversation and remarks of the crowd to understand that five men, who were suspected of being German spies had killed the signalman in the signal box near the station.

They had stabbed the signalman and then had cut the wires and smashed the levers in the box. In an incredibly short time a mob of angry people had assembled and although it was plain now that four of the miscreants had escaped, the fifth had been seized by Captain Swain and by him would be taken to the proper authorities to deal with such a man.

Earl frequently glanced keenly at the prisoner seated behind him as the car resumed its way. He was unable, however, to distinguish clearly the features of the man and as no words were spoken his voice was not heard.

On and still on sped the car without its speed decreasing. At last the faint outlines of the great city were seen, but even then the speed was not slackened.

Captain Swain did not explain or apologize to

his young companion when quickly he directed James to drive to the quarters of the soldiers.

Earl, although now it was past three o'clock in the morning was so interested and excited that he would have felt almost ignored if attention had been given him, but the prisoner was sent to the great building where German prisoners were confined.

As soon as the man had been given into the hands of the authorities Captain Swain returned to the seat and said to James, "Go to the Victoria Hotel. I am deeply grateful to you," he added, turning to Earl, "for the part which you have taken in this affair."

"I did not mean to take any part," said Earl lightly. "It all just happened by accident."

"That mattered little. The great thing is that you chanced to fall in with these spies and your word has been of great aid to us."

Earl ventured to ask the question which was uppermost in his mind. "Captain Swain," he inquired, "do you know where Philip Alden is?"

"Questions like that are not in order just now," said the captain not unkindly. "Meanwhile, if you hear anything more about him do not fail to communicate with me at once."

Earl readily promised although it did not seem probable to him that he would again be brought into contact with the man. The life of the spy would be worthless if once the British officials should place their hands on him. How he was sending word to Germany if he was still in England, Earl could not understand.

However, the exciting days passed, each bringing its increasing burden and still more arousing the heart of Great Britain.

It certainly was true that no longer could England be called "Merrie" England. The people for the most part were quiet but there was manifest a spirit of determination that increased as the days passed.

Meanwhile Earl drew up a little table which he pasted on the door of his room in the hotel. It was a table of the dates on which, up to that time, war had been declared by the various countries:

August 1st,—Germany against France.
August 3rd,—Germany against Russia.
August 5th,—Great Britain against Germany.
August 6th,—Austria against Russia.
August 8th,—Montenegro against Austria.
August 10th,—France against Austria.
August 13th,—Great Britain against Austria.
August 23rd,—Japan against Germany.
August 25th,—Austria against Japan.

There were rumors frequent too that Turkey would soon enter the fray and that Italy not long could remain neutral. It was also commonly believed that if these nations joined in the terrific contest the Balkan States that were not already at war would soon declare it.

In the English newspapers there were frequent references to the influence of their enemies in Constantinople where it was said they were striving to arouse the Turks not only to fight, but to appeal to the Mohammedans in India to join them. The result of all this, according to the newspapers, was that a massacre of the Christians might follow at almost any time.

The papers also had been filled with reports of the movements of the great armies. Unmindful of her solemn promise or treaty Germany had swept into little Belgium, expecting that her passage through the land would not be seriously opposed by its small army.

However, the spirit of the Belgians was the surprise of the month. Rallying all their strength, they long resisted the efforts of the advance of the mighty army to overcome them.

The Germans were approaching, it was said, like the waves of the sea. Their numbers were almost countless. With the precise thoroughness

for which the nation has been justly honored, preparations for even the most minute details had been made.

It was impossible for the Belgians to hold back the overwhelming advance. After a time they were strengthened by the coming of the French soldiers, but as the German troops were massing for the passage through the Belgian borders, steadily and surely the armies of the Allies were forced backward.

As the army swept forward Brussels was abandoned by the Belgian army, a part of which then withdrew into Antwerp. Part of the Belgian army was driven into the city, which sometimes has been called the Liverpool of the Continent. Above this city great dirigibles of the Germans frequently at night dropped their shells by which the innocent people were killed or maimed.

Later, Louvain was overcome and the beautiful little city, with its libraries and museums, was destroyed. To justify their actions the Germans reported that a boy had shot a German soldier. They were ordered therefore to turn upon the helpless inhabitants, many of whom were slain and their houses destroyed.

It was like the sweep of the hordes that overran Rome centuries before. An end, however, was

not yet. Grimly and with determination the English people were becoming aware of the extent of the task confronting them and were determined to meet it. On every side men were enlisting and a great impulse was given the struggle when there came a report that a dash had been made by some of the British ships of war and that five of the German fleet had been destroyed. Troops were marching through the city, martial music was in the air and the spirits of the people became serious but not castdown.

In the midst of these exciting experiences, however, Earl Platt suddenly found his attention diverted by experiences doubly exciting because in them he himself had no small share.

CHAPTER XXVII

CONCLUSION

A MONTH had elapsed since the beginning of the war. Events had been moving on with great rapidity and the success of the great German host in driving the armies of the Allies before them had been unchecked. Varying reports were coming from the other border of Germany where the Russians claimed to be forcing their way into the country, while the Germans were saying that the successes all were theirs.

In London, the seriousness of the people deepened with every passing day. Reports of the wounded and the dead were many. Indeed, the bravery of the English troops in contending, as they had been compelled to do, on the battlefield with forces that outnumbered them from three to five times, had been marvelous. But there was no disguising the fact that with the other defenders, they were being driven every day farther before the Kaiser's army which it was believed had Paris as its goal.

Everyone was expecting to hear accounts of further engagements between the fleets of the English and the Germans. There was an air of uncertainty and yet of rugged determination that was manifest on every side.

To Earl all this was not only exciting but intensely inspiring. Never before had he been in the midst of such surroundings. He found himself sharing with the English boys in their desire to enlist and almost was tempted to write home for permission.

The word which he had received from his father had not been altogether satisfactory. Simply and sharply he had been bidden to wait for his brother, Leon. Since the outbreak of the war Earl had not received any word from his brother in France. What had befallen him? Whether or not he was in the war-zone he could not find out. Aware of Leon's plan to go on a motorcycle from Paris to Brussels, Earl's anxiety increased with the passing days. There was a fear in his heart now that his brother must have entered the region where the fighting was occurring, and, if he had, there was slight hope of his being rescued until the issue of the contest had been decided.

Refugees from the Continent were pouring into

London by the hundreds. Among them all, however, although frequently he went down to the Charing Cross Station and watched the incoming trains, he did not find Leon. The uncertainty was becoming almost unbearable. And yet what could he do? The strict word from his father was to wait. Meanwhile thousands of his fellow-countrymen were returning to America. Some of these were glad to secure passage by steerage and for such accommodations to pay premiums several times above the price of a choice stateroom a few weeks before.

Many of the London people were becoming nervous because of their fear of the huge German dirigibles. Reports of the work of these almost uncanny creations doubtless were exaggerated but they were frequent and alarming.

What would Earl's feelings have been if he had known that his brother was now enrolled among the French soldiers? How surprised he would have been if anyone had told him that Leon had been accepted, as had many other American boys, by the French to serve in the aviation corps. Indeed, if Earl could have seen his brother he would almost have refused to believe the sight, for the latter with another young Frenchman was mak-

ing frequent flights high in the air. And the place where he was flying was with the army in the field.

It was at such a time as this that Earl was surprised one morning to receive a visit from Captain Swain. At the request of the latter an interview was held in Earl's room.

"What word did you receive from your brother?" inquired Captain Swain as he took the chair offered him by his host.

"I didn't receive any word. Have you had any?" asked Earl eagerly.

Captain Swain shook his head as he replied, "You must be patient. There are many English homes to-day in which the feeling is not unlike your own. The good people know that their sons have gone forth to defend Old England, but where or when or how they hear not a word."

"But Leon is an American."

"I fancy the nationality of a man who happens to be caught within the lines of battle is not likely to count for very much, not even if he belongs to a nation as great as yours. I think, however, that you will receive good news and that before long. It was not to talk with you concerning your brother, however, that I came to see you this morning."

Earl's interest and questions were expressed by his face instead of by words as he eagerly waited for his visitor to continue.

"I fancy," said the captain, "that you have heard nothing more concerning Philip Alden?"

"Not a word. Have you?"

"From what I understand, you are living up to the traditions of your countrymen," said Captain Swain, smiling slightly as he spoke.

"What do you mean?"

"I am told that the Yankees answer one question by asking another. I might say that we have kept close watch on Philip Alden and I think we shall soon run him to earth."

"Is he still in England?"

"If reports are to be trusted he is."

"Do you know where he is?"

"Not at this moment, but I hope before this same hour to-morrow we shall have him in our nets."

"What about the woman up on the coast?"

"We have her under care, but as yet she has not been arrested."

"And the girl who flew the pigeons?"

"She is one of the most dangerous of them all. She has several disguises and has eluded some of our most keen-sensed men. I am hopeful,

however, that we shall soon have her as well as Philip Alden in our hands."

"There is one thing I never have understood."

"Only one?" inquired the captain with a smile.

"One of a good many," laughed Earl. "What about that telephone up on the coast?"

"It was a single wire and supposed to be a private one. I suspected something of the kind and found my suspicions fulfilled. Philip Alden used the wire and it was his voice you heard that day when you were with me."

"And was he concerned with the five men who stabbed the signalman and cut the wires and smashed the levers in the box at that place where we stopped?"

"He was the ringleader and the only one who got away."

"What was done to the others?"

"I fancy you might have your questions answered if you should ask the old German or the old sailor who was flying the carrier pigeons, for they were one and the same man."

Earl stared in surprise at his visitor, but, ignoring the interest of his young hearer, Captain Swain continued, "I have come to request you to accompany me to the place off Fleet Street where you say Philip Alden had an office."

Earl instantly was aroused by the words of his visitor and said excitedly, "Is he there now?"

"He is not. All I want you to do is to conduct me to the place. According to our reports Philip Alden has had several such 'offices,' and has appeared in different places under different guises. He is the brainiest and brightest of all the spies and the suspects with whom we have had anything to do. He speaks several languages fluently, so fluently indeed that it is impossible to detect any fault. An Englishman would think he was speaking English, while naturally his German is flawless. He speaks French like a Parisian. He is the brains of a large body of conspirators who have aimed to keep the Germans informed concerning the condition and plans of our army and fleet."

"When do you want me to go?" inquired Earl.

"At once."

"All right," responded the boy cheerfully, as he secured his hat and said, "I am ready."

Together the captain and Earl descended the lift and entered the automobile which was awaiting them.

When he rode along the Strand he was impressed by the great throngs which still filled the street. With difficulty James, who was still the

chauffeur, threaded his way among the myriad vehicles of different kinds.

When at last the destination was reached, Captain Swain alighted and Earl and James quickly followed his example. Surprised at the coming of the chauffeur, Earl excitedly whispered to Captain Swain, "Is James just a chauffeur or is he—"

The expression in the captain's eyes caused Earl instantly to be silent. He never was informed as to just the position the somewhat mysterious chauffeur of Captain Swain occupied. He was convinced, however, that the man was an official and held a place of marked influence.

It was now late in the afternoon although the sun still was shining. At once entering the building and apparently ignoring any watch that might be kept upon their movements Captain Swain, followed by Earl and James, entered the hallway.

Once inside, the captain said to James, "You know the position you are to take."

"I do, sir," responded James, as, saluting, he walked quickly along the hall and disappeared from sight at the farther end of it.

Meanwhile, Captain Swain and Earl made their way up the stairways without any attempt to move noiselessly and when they arrived at the

room they were seeking, the captain stopped and rapped.

When no response was received to his summons, he drew a key from his pocket and then holding his revolver in his hand, unlocked the door and entered.

Earl had not been bidden to return. All that the captain had requested of him was to conduct him to Philip Alden's office; but the excited boy, upon finding that he was not bidden to depart, quickly followed his friend up the stairway. When the door of Philip Alden's room was opened he at once entered.

Only a moment was required to convince the intruders that no one was in the room.

"We shall now have to wait, that is, if you desire to remain," said Captain Swain.

"I am going to stay if you do not send me away."

Nothing more was said as they seated themselves to await, Earl knew not what.

The hours passed slowly, darkness crept over the great city, twinkling lights appeared in the sky and still the strange vigil continued. The distant rumbling in the city streets gradually became less distinct and Earl was convinced that midnight was at hand.

The excitement he had felt when first he had come was largely gone and yet the boy was determined to remain to the end.

About one o'clock, as nearly as Earl could estimate the time, Captain Swain started and moving cautiously to the door, listened intently.

Someone was coming through the hallway. The footsteps were plainly heard and in a brief time the click of a key in the lock of the door was heard.

"Move back into the corner," whispered Captain Swain, almost savagely to Earl. "Do not move and do not speak."

In the dim light, the man, whom Earl instantly recognized as Philip Alden, stepped into the room and closed the door. As he did so Captain Swain said quickly and in a low voice, "Do not move. We have you covered, Philip Alden."

There was a moment of breathless silence. Earl almost could hear the beating of his heart. The outlines of the two men could be seen in the dim light as they stood facing each other. A slight movement on the part of either would doubtless have caused the other to fire.

"What is it?" inquired Philip Alden, at last in a low voice.

"We have you now for what you are, Philip

Alden. Although you have a half dozen other names, your true name is the German spy."

Instantly the accused man sprang against the officer and giving him a violent push sent him sprawling into the corner where Earl was standing.

There was no delay on the part of the fugitive, however. Darting to the rear corner of the room he lifted a trap in the floor and before the captain could fire upon him or make any attempt to follow, the man disappeared from sight.

Recovering from their confusion, Earl and the captain instantly ran to the place where the man had so strangely disappeared. There they found not only the trap door, but a strong rope and pulley, which indicated how the man had escaped.

As they stood there, however, they could hear the sounds of a struggle far below them.

"James has him," said the captain eagerly. "That is what I sent him there for. I had heard of this strange way of escape. We will close the trap-door and fasten it."

As soon as this had been done both the captain and Earl ran speedily from the room and when they came to the ground floor they saw James holding Philip Alden upon the floor. Without a word Captain Swain instantly produced a pair of

handcuffs and despite the struggles of the prisoner he was quickly secured.

Ignoring the presence of Earl, the spy was at once taken to the automobile and as soon as he was seated the car started. Earl was left standing in the street. He was aware that Captain Swain would not return.

Delaying only a brief time Earl hailed a passing bus and soon was on his way along the Strand on his return to his hotel.

When he was once more in his room he was startled as he saw a cablegram awaiting him on the table. Hastily opening it he read, "Find Leon."

The two words were so simple and yet how impossible to fulfill! Earl seated himself in an easy-chair and tried seriously to think over his experiences. Surely his father could not know what he was asking. Not a word had been heard from Leon. A dense curtain of mystery rested over the movements of the armies and fleets. He was three thousand miles from home and in a country that was one of the warring nations of Europe. The events through which he had passed were stirring, but there was in the mind of the excited boy a conviction that they were mild compared with those which he must meet if he

attempted to carry out his father's request. The big European war had only just begun. Terrible as it had been in its losses of life and destruction of property, in the enmity it had made between men and nations, that which he already had seen was sufficient to convince Earl that still more stirring experiences awaited him.

THE END

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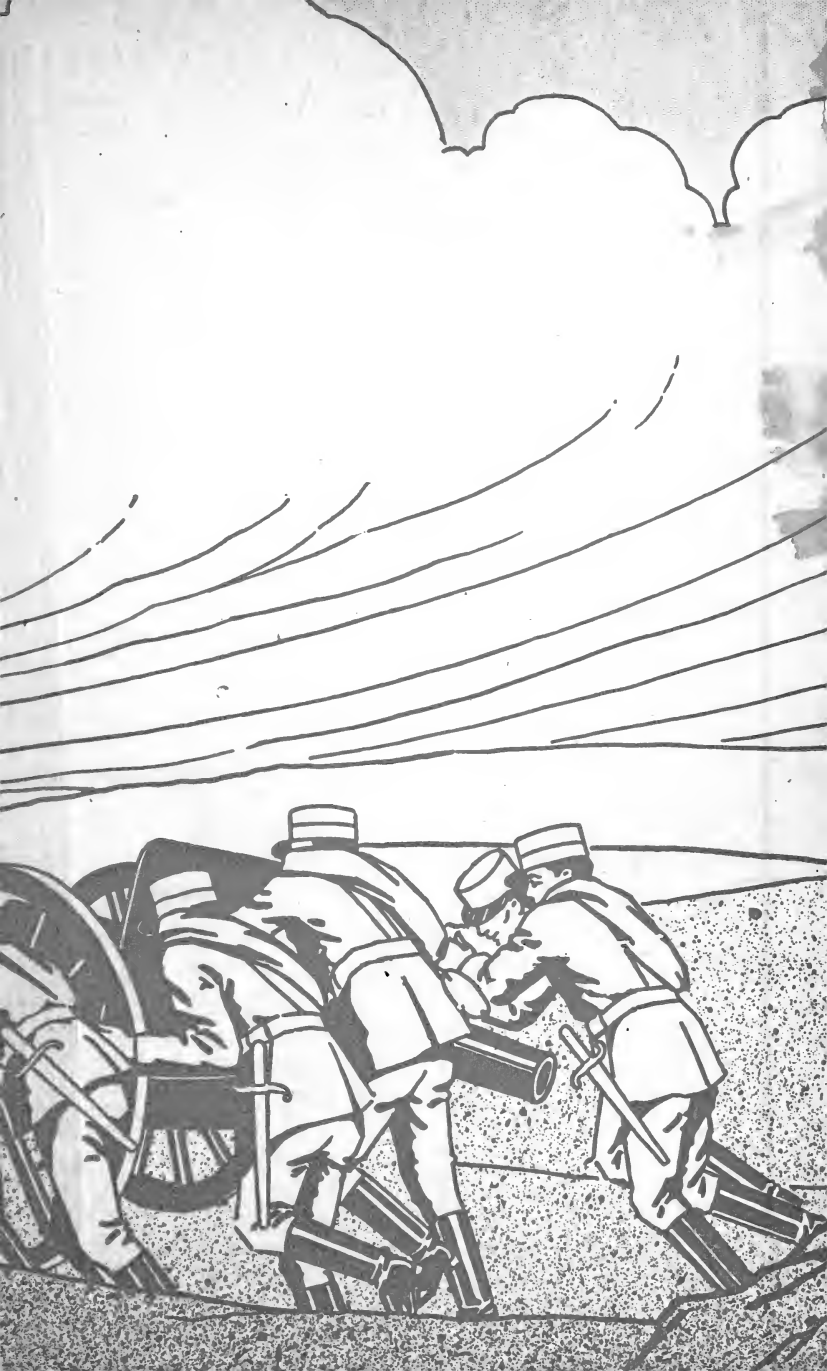
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